Student Academic Integrity

2022 Annual Report

Introduction

The [management of student academic integrity](#) at Deakin University takes a whole-of-organisation and educative approach that supports students to use, generate and communicate information and ideas in an ethical, honest and responsible manner. We aim to embed a culture of integrity that encourages the extension of these behaviours into a student's professional life after graduation. All commencing students complete a compulsory zero credit-point academic integrity module, and student academic integrity is reinforced throughout the student's course by their educators and through Deakin's comprehensive study support information and resources and communication campaigns. [Deakin University Student Association](#) (DUSA) is also active in promoting and supporting student academic integrity.

The University responds to allegations that students have breached academic integrity standards in a fair, consistent, timely and transparent manner, and appropriate outcomes are applied where behaviour is found to have breached academic integrity standards. This public report presents annual data on student breaches of academic integrity at Deakin University during the 2022 academic year.

Detection of student breaches of academic integrity in 2022

In 2022 the number of student breaches of academic integrity detected at Deakin (n= 1770), and the number of detected breaches as a percentage of total course enrolments (3%), increased compared to previous years (**Chart 1** below). Cheating is and has historically been significantly under-detected across the sector, and the increased number of breaches in 2022 likely reflects Deakin's enhanced breach detection methods rather than a substantive increase in student cheating behaviour.
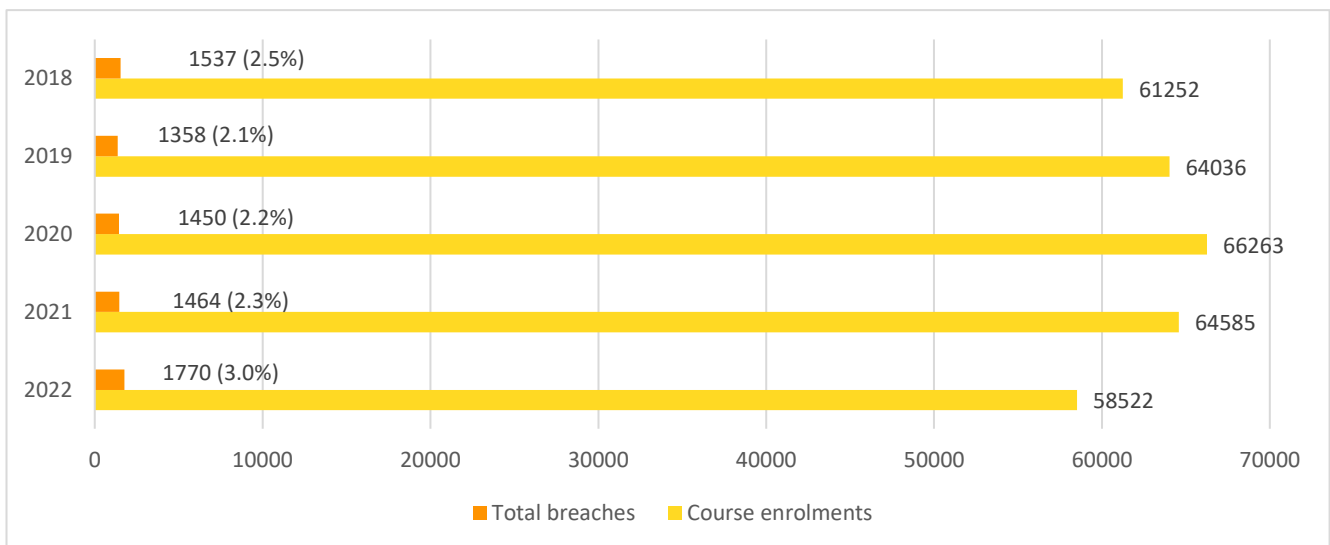

Chart 1: Student academic integrity breaches against total course enrolments 2018-2022

Chart 2 shows that the most common academic integrity breach detected across the University in 2022, as in previous years, was plagiarism: 40% (703 cases) of all breaches. However, plagiarism decreased in both number of cases and proportion compared to 2021 (746 cases, 51%). The latter reduction was owing to increased contract cheating detection compared to previous years: 514 cases (29% of all breaches) compared to 232 cases (16%) in 2021, 197 cases (14%) in 2020, and 99 cases (7%) in 2019. The increasing rate of contract cheating detection is due to Deakin's introduction of proactive, scalable detection methods via the complementary use of *Overcast* (an innovative detection software developed by Deakin) alongside Turnitin's *Authorship.*
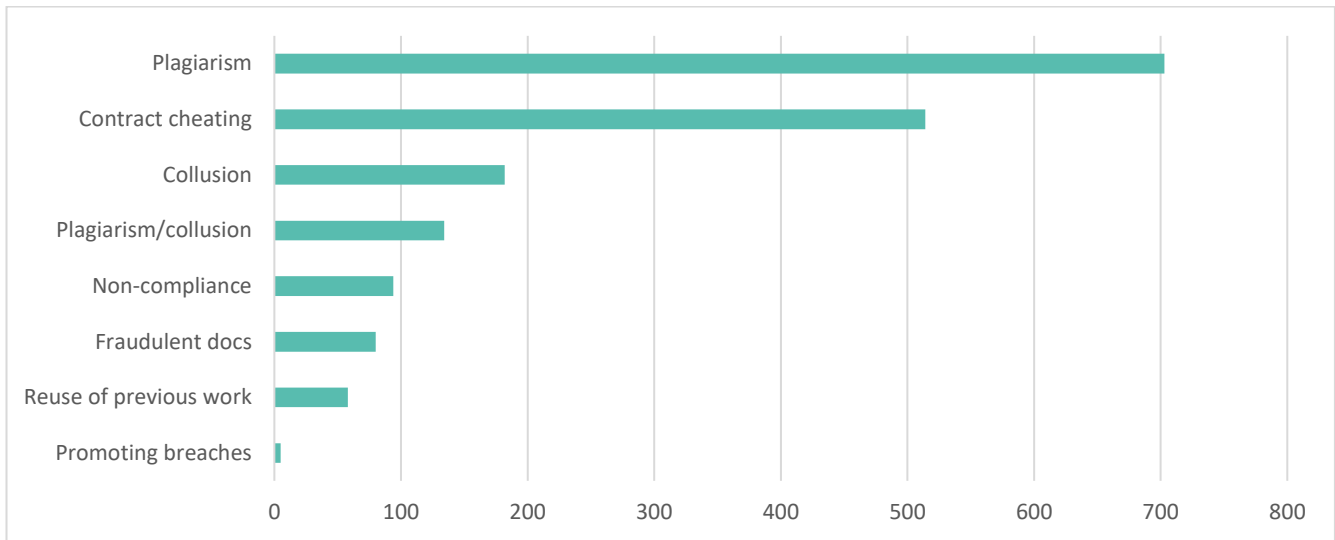
Chart 2: Detected student academic integrity breaches by category in 2022

As in previous years, the most common outcomes for students breaching academic integrity in 2022 **(Chart 3)** were educative: further academic integrity training or study skills training. One hundred and forty-nine allegations resulted in either suspension or exclusion for up to one year (compared to 55 in 2021). Forty-six allegations resulted in permanent exclusion from the University for breaching academic integrity (compared to 13 in 2021). This increase is a result of increased numbers of individual students receiving multiple substantiated allegations of historical contract cheating in 2022. This trend is likely to continue as further cases of historic contract cheating are investigated and pursued.
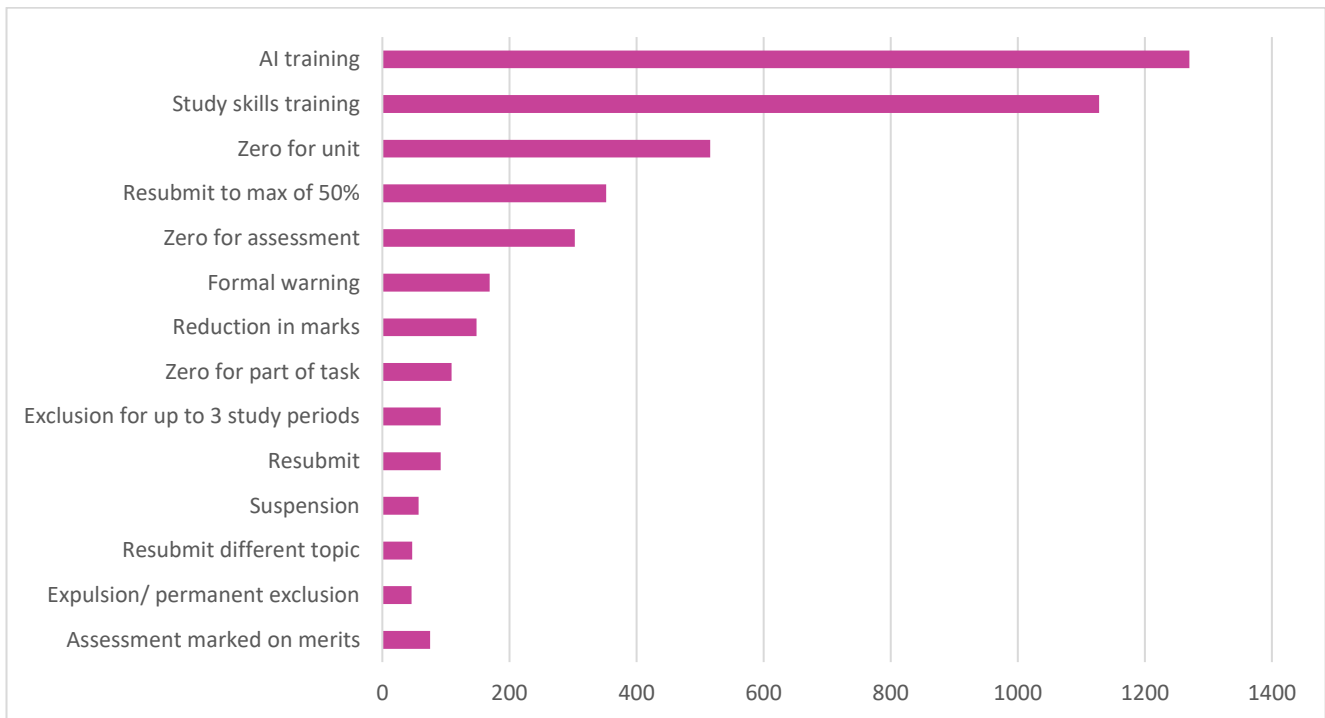

Chart 3: Student academic integrity breach outcomes in 2022

In 2022, 84 (5%) of Faculty Academic Integrity Committee decisions were appealed (the same percentage as in 2021), and in 13 (15%) of these instances the University Appeals Committee upheld the appeal in whole or in part (compared to 9% in 2021).

Summary of key issues in 2022

Key issues in 2022	Actions to address key issues
Reactive (reported by teaching staff) detection of student breaches of academic integrity remains relatively low	Low reporting of student breaches of academic integrity may be linked to the time burden associated with raising an allegation. With the introduction of the revised Student Academic Integrity policy in early 2023, new online systems are being designed to streamline reporting of alleged breaches. In addition, the introduction in the new Student Academic Integrity procedure of standard outcomes for defined breach categories may incentivise staff reporting by improving transparency of outcomes and, in many cases, turnaround time for implementation of outcomes.
Contract cheating detection continued to improve in 2022 (514 substantiated allegations vs 232 in 2021, 197 in 2020 and 99 in 2019), but remains below true rates of cheating: estimates in Australian higher education range from 6% of individual students (Bretag 2019) to 8% (Curtis et al 2021), increasing to 19% if including student use of file-sharing sites (Curtis et al 2021)	The Office of the Dean of Students has enhanced contract cheating detection capacity at Deakin by implementing two complementary pieces of proactive detection software: Turnitin's *Authorship* (external vendor) and *Overcast* (developed in-house). Systematic detection of historical cheating and intervention at scale commenced with the cohort of students otherwise due to graduate after Trimester 2, 2022, and continues with each graduating cohort, in addition to ongoing work responding to reactive (teaching staff-initiated) allegations of contract cheating. The new Student Academic Integrity policy suite, revised to increase institutional capacity for robust contract cheating intervention at scale by reducing Faculty Academic Integrity Committee time spent on routine cases (via the introduction of an early intervention for poor academic practice, as well as standard outcomes offered to students receiving an allegation), has been effective since Trimester 1, 2023.
In late 2022 and early 2023, generative Artificial Intelligence tools such as Chat GPT became widely publicly available, leading to significant discussion across the sector on impact on learning, assessment and academic integrity	In early 2023 (during the final weeks of the 2022 academic year), Deakin quickly established, and communicated to students and staff, an institutional position emphasising the positive opportunities for learning and digital fluency associated with the evolution of generative AI tools, as well as guidelines on using generative AI ethically and responsibly. The Academic Support team in the Office of the Dean of Students revised Deakin's Study Support resources and the Guide to Referencing to further support students in appropriate use of generative AI in learning and assessment. A Students as Partners Advisory Group has been established, with student advisors working with staff partners to explore student perspectives on using generative AI in learning and assessment and to co-design further resources to support student success and integrity. The Office of the Dean of Students has published an internal guidance note for teaching staff on Deakin's approach to detecting unethical student use of artificial intelligence in assessment.