

# **Student Conduct and Complaints**

**1 January – 31 December 2024**

## About this Report

This report has been collated by Conduct and Integrity to provide an insight into the incidence of plagiarism, breaches of the UNSW *Student Code of Conduct* and *Code of Conduct and Values*, and student complaints across the University between the 1 January and 31 December 2024.

### Limitations

Information in this report is based on records of plagiarism, breaches of *Student Code of Conduct* and *Code of Conduct and Values*, and student complaints on the *Student Conduct and Plagiarism Register* on 24 April 2025.

The quality of data in this report depends on records maintained by Schools, Faculties and Conduct and Integrity.

### Conduct and Integrity

Office of Assurance and Integrity

June 2025

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### New complaint and case management system

In February 2024, UNSW launched a new complaint and case management system for recording and managing student plagiarism, complaints and reports of misconduct.

## About Conduct and Integrity

Conduct and Integrity investigates and resolves serious complaints and wrongdoing at UNSW, managing:

- Serious student conduct and academic integrity matters
- Research integrity matters
- Public Interest Disclosures 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 and Case Management System

Conduct and Integrity 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

### what's up?



Less serious plagiarism reported by Schools were **double** 2023 case numbers (p6)

530 cases

**Ai**

219%



Exam misconduct case numbers rise with unauthorised use of generative AI – and back on trend with previous years (p14)



140%

Non-academic misconduct at record high (p7), mostly involving anti-social behaviour (p18)



Student complaints dropped by 12% in 2024 compared to 2023. (p19)

↓ **23%**

Fewer complaints about special consideration. (p19)



Document fraud submitted for admission and to support special consideration applications drop (p7 & 15)

### what's down?

### what's new?



**SpeakUp** campaign to describe expected behaviour and speak up against unacceptable behaviour (p22)

New guide on **Ethical and Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence** (p24)

New **Code of Conduct and Values** setting out expected behaviour for the UNSW community.

New **Complaints Management and Investigation Policy and Procedure** for managing breaches of the Code of Conduct and Values

### Steady



**Contract cheating** remains an ongoing concern with expanded services (p13)



Fewer reports of **contract cheating** but most involve historical cheating (p12)

### what's old?

**Chegg** still in use but unlike previous years

# INTRODUCTION

## Student Conduct and Integrity

Until May 2024 the UNSW [Student Code of Conduct \(Student Code\)](#) 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.

On 17 May 2024 a new UNSW [Code of Conduct and Values](#) (the **Code**), applying to all members of the UNSW community<sup>1</sup>, was launched. The Code's principles and responsibilities guide and support the UNSW community to act with integrity, honesty and trust, in a positive, productive and open culture.

At UNSW, schools, faculties, divisions, and Conduct and Integrity 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.

UNSW's [Plagiarism Policy](#) defines plagiarism and its varied forms and sets out the process for managing student plagiarism when it is detected.

The [Complaint Management and Investigation Policy and Procedure \(CMIPP\)](#) sets out the policy and process for managing all complaints and investigations at the university, including potential breaches of the Code and student misconduct.

## Breaches of academic integrity and the Code

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

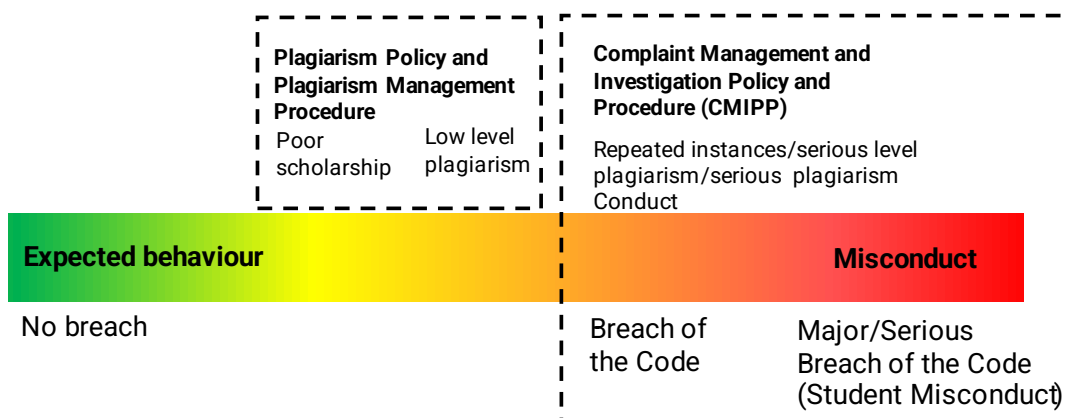


Figure 1: UNSW recognises expected academic conduct, plagiarism and breaches of the Code of Conduct and Values as occurring along a spectrum

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.

<sup>1</sup> The UNSW community comprises students, employees, affiliates, and certain contractors/consultants.

Incidents of poor scholarship and less serious levels of plagiarism<sup>2</sup>, recognised as gaps in academic skill, are managed locally by the appropriate school and faculty according to the University's [Plagiarism Policy and Student Plagiarism Management Procedure](#).

Cases of serious plagiarism in submitted work detected by Schools are referred to Conduct and Integrity to manage as a breach of the Code, and potential student academic misconduct, according to the CMIPP. 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 the Code, including poor academic integrity. The University's Code of Conduct and Values, policies and procedures enable Schools and the Conduct and Integrity 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 Conduct and Integrity to manage.

Conduct and Integrity 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 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](#)<sup>3</sup> 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.

# UNSW Courageous Conversations

As humans, we can all make mistakes from time to time. Here at UNSW we believe that students deserve the opportunity to learn from theirs.



<sup>2</sup> Low-level plagiarism comprises 'minor', 'moderate' and 'significant' levels of plagiarism described in the UNSW *Plagiarism Policy and Student Plagiarism Management Procedure*

<sup>3</sup> A *Courageous Conversation* recognises that as humans, we can all make mistakes from time to time, and that students deserve the opportunity to learn from theirs. A *Courageous Conversation* is a less formal than an investigation and is an exchange or a meeting with a Case Manager. Students who admit to their mistakes before a full investigation takes place may be entitled to a lesser penalty than they would otherwise receive.

## PLAGIARISM AND MISCONDUCT – REPORTED

In 2024, out of 82,272<sup>4</sup> enrolled students, there were 2,274 cases recorded in the University's Student Conduct and Plagiarism Register. This represents a 43% increase in the number of cases reported between 2023 and 2024. However, as indicated in Table 1 below, as the number of students meaningfully increased (70,238 in last year's report to 82,272 this year), this represents a half percent increase as a proportion of the student population between 2023 and 2024.

The table below provides a more detailed breakdown of the cases raised by the University in 2024 compared with previous years, and percentage change compared to 2023. Of the 2,274 cases recorded in 2024, 945 (42%) were serious cases<sup>5</sup> managed by Conduct and Integrity.

Type	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	% change 2023-2024
Poor scholarship	86	98	75	78	168	115%
Less serious plagiarism	827	1,379	853	546	1,164	113%
Serious plagiarism	449	764	411	587	433	-26%
Exam misconduct	459	224	402	189	344	82%
Falsified documentation (course related)	46	21	33	107	51	-52%
Falsified documentation (Admission or conferral)	53	41	71	18	12	-33%
Other academic misconduct	15	5	7	19	1	-
Non-academic misconduct	38	17	37	42	101	140%
Total number of cases	1,973	2,549	1,889	1,586	2,274	43%
Students enrolled (headcount)	63,958	77,868	61,322	70,238 <sup>6</sup>	82,272	17%
Cases as % of enrolled	3.1%	3.3%	3.1%	2.3%	2.8%	0.5%

Table 1: Annual comparison by case type and number of cases by year, with percentage (%) change between 2023 and 2024. For serious misconduct, this table represents matters referred to Conduct and Integrity by Schools.

## 2024 Highlights and trends

### Reports of less serious level plagiarism lifts

Reports of 'Poor scholarship' and less serious plagiarism, which includes low-level unauthorised use of generative artificial intelligence (AI), were more than double the number of cases in 2023. This may be attributed to an increase in unauthorised use of generative AI as well as better detection and recording of low-level plagiarism in the new case management system by Schools. Further information is set out on pages 9 and 11.

### Rise in unauthorised use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) continues

While the University encourages the appropriate use of AI in learning, it has seen a rise in unauthorised use of generative AI in assessable work – a trend which is consistent across the education sector, in Australia and overseas. In 2024, there were a reported 530 cases of misuse of generative AI, comprising: 394 of 1,164 cases (34%) of less serious plagiarism reported by Schools; and 136 cases of serious plagiarism and exam

<sup>4</sup> Source: 2024 UNSW Annual Report.

<sup>5</sup> Comprising serious plagiarism (436 cases), exam misconduct (344 cases), falsified documents (course and admissions related) (61 cases), and non-academic Misconduct (104 cases).

<sup>6</sup> Source: 2023 Annual Report (reported in last year's reports as 69,372).

misconduct suspected to involve inappropriate use of generative AI tools referred to Conduct and Integrity by Schools for investigation. This represents a **219% increase** on the 166 cases reported in 2023. Most cases involved the use of generative AI tools, like ChatGPT, or the use of AI-assisted translation and text polishing tools such as Grammarly. Further information is set out on page 11.

#### *Admission fraud detection continues to drop*

In 2024 there were 12 cases referred to Conduct and Integrity for investigation of falsified admission documents. This is significantly lower than in 2018, when there were 112 referrals for investigation following routine back-to-source checks of admission documents.

Conduct and Integrity and the university's Admissions Compliance team are working together proactively to strengthen processes and compliance.

#### *Contract cheating and cyber risks continue to be concerning*

In 2024, just under half (209 of 433) of serious plagiarism cases referred by Schools to Conduct and Integrity for investigation related to contract cheating<sup>7</sup>. This is generally consistent with 2023, where 232 cases of contract cheating were referred to Conduct and Integrity for investigation.

Of note is the increasing number of reports received by the University identifying students alleged to have engaged in contract cheating. While most of the reports have been made anonymously, or under a pseudonym, the University also received reports from purported contract cheating providers identifying students whom they claim to have 'helped' with their written assessments. Further information is set out on page 13.

#### *Reports of non-academic misconduct at record high*

The number of reports of non-academic misconduct reached a record high of 101 reports in 2024. As indicated in Table 1, this is more than double (140%) the number of reports received in 2023, and almost three times the average of 33 reports over the previous four years. Of note is that most (74%) of the reports were related to unacceptable student conduct towards another person. Further information is set out on page 17.

#### *Document fraud to support special consideration applications return to baseline level*

The number of referrals for falsified course related documents, specifically falsified medical certificates to support applications for special consideration for assessable work and fee remission, dropped by half, with 51 cases in 2024 compared with a record high of 107 cases in 2023. This may mark a return to the baseline average of 33 (over 2018-2022).

#### *Misconduct in the student population remains very low*

Despite the apparent rise in cases of poor scholarship, plagiarism and student academic misconduct over the last decade it is important to acknowledge that these instances remain very low within the student population – 1.1% (581 cases of 52,595 enrolled students) in 2014 compared to **2.8% (2,274 cases of 82,272 enrolled students) in 2024**. This statistic is a testament to the university's unwavering commitment to academic integrity, driven by substantial investment in education, deterrence and detection, and to the dedication of academic and non-academic staff to fostering a culture of academic honesty and excellence.

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<sup>7</sup> Also known as 'ghost writing' this is 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 2024.

In 2024, the University closed **2,154** cases of plagiarism and student academic misconduct cases. This is **637 (42%)** more cases than in 2023.

Of the 2,154 cases, 1,287 were cases of less serious plagiarism closed by Schools and 867 were cases of serious plagiarism or other academic misconduct managed by Conduct and Integrity.

As shown in Figure 2, most (92% or 1,983) of the 2,154 cases were substantiated or partially substantiated. Of note is that most of the 87 cases that did not proceed were cases referred to Conduct and Integrity but were returned to the respective School to manage as less serious levels of plagiarism, as they did not meet the threshold of serious plagiarism.

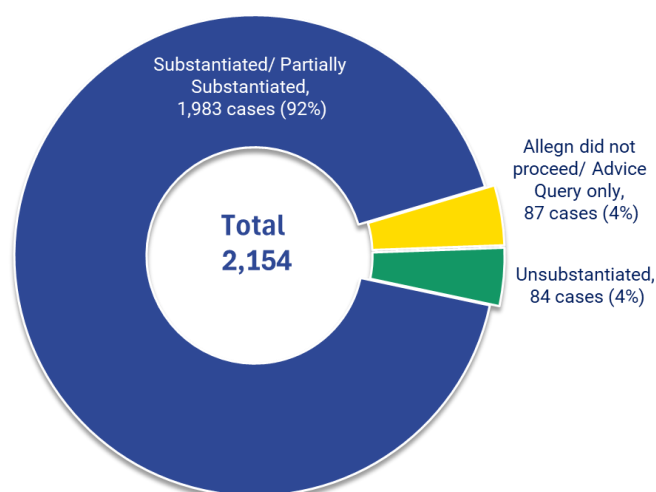


Figure 2: All plagiarism and academic misconduct cases closed by the University in 2024.

Cases by type	Number	Percentage of (%) total
<b>Poor scholarship</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>8.3%</b>
Misuse of Generative AI tool	56	
Copying	25	
Inappropriate citation	13	
Collusion	10	
Inappropriate paraphrasing	8	
Self-plagiarism	2	
Not identified	51	
<b>Less serious plagiarism</b>	<b>1,114</b>	<b>56.2%</b>
Misuse of Generative AI tool	426	
Copying	282	
Collusion	90	
Inappropriate citation	80	
Inappropriate paraphrasing	58	
Self-plagiarism	25	
Low level contract cheating	2	
Not identified	151	
<b>Serious plagiarism</b>	<b>368</b>	<b>18.6%</b>
Contract cheating	132	
Self-plagiarism	92	
Unauthorised use of Generative AI	60	
Copying	35	
Collusion	5	
Inappropriate citation	1	
Not identified	43	
<b>Serious breach of the Student Code/Code of Conduct and Values (May 2024)</b>	<b>336</b>	<b>16.9%</b>
Unauthorised communication in exam	118	
Unauthorised use of Generative AI (Exam)	98	
Unauthorised materials or property in exam	49	
Falsified documents (course related)	45	
Falsified documents (Admission or conferral)	11	
Not identified	15	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,983</b>	

Table 2 Breakdown of the 1,983 substantiated or partially substantiated cases

## Faculty

As indicated by Table 3, there was a notable rise in cases of poor scholarship and low-level plagiarism recorded by most faculties in 2024 compared to the previous years. This increase may be attributed to an increase in cases of unauthorised use of generative AI and improved efforts in detecting and recording of cases on the register.

Of note is the concerted effort made by all Schools, and UNSW Canberra and the Faculty of Law and Justice in particular, to educate students on appropriate use of AI in assessments; detect unauthorised use of AI; and conduct student interviews to individually assess learning, where unauthorised use of AI was detected. This focus resulted in the total number of substantiated cases of poor scholarship and low-level plagiarism rise from 558 cases in 2023 to 1,279 cases in 2024, representing a 129% increase. UNSW Canberra recorded a significant increase in low-level plagiarism, from 43 cases in 2023 to 183 cases in 2024, due to the its efforts on detecting and managing unauthorised use of AI in assessments.

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	% change 2023-24	2024 Headcount <sup>8</sup>	2024 % of headcount
Business School	255	289	245	296	478	61%	20,878	2.3%
Engineering	507	765	435	266	431	62%	20,429	1.3%
Law and Justice	36	56	61	100	247	147%	5,263	4.7%
Arts, Design and Architecture	216	189	229	192	245	28%	13,999	1.8%
UNSW Canberra	105	78	45	62	197	218%	4,452	4.4%
UNSW College		187	161	158	172	9%	2,066	8.3%
Science	215	410	223	118	129	9%	8,692	1.5%
Medicine & Health	24	113	77	60	48	-20%	6,335	0.8%
Not identified		30	9	2	36	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Total</b>	1,358	2,117	1,485	1,272	1,963	57%		

Table 3 Annual comparison of substantiated cases of plagiarism and academic misconduct 2020-2024

Several schools showed significant increases in cases recorded on the university's plagiarism register, with some recording cases on the register for the first time. In 2024 the Faculty of Law and Justice recorded a total of 237 cases poor scholarship and low-level plagiarism, compared to just one case of poor scholarship in 2023. The School of Education in the Faculty of Arts, Design and Architecture recorded four cases in 2023 and 45 cases in 2024.

In 2024, Conduct and Integrity investigated and closed 704 cases of serious level plagiarism<sup>9</sup> and student academic misconduct referred by schools.

As indicated by Figure 3, cases investigated by Conduct and Integrity were predominantly in the Faculties of Engineering and Business. However, the types of cases investigated differed significantly. Cases at the serious level in the Faculty of Business comprised contract cheating (75 cases) and unauthorised use of generative AI (112 cases), while cases in the Faculty of Engineering comprised unauthorised communication or materials in an exam (84 cases), copying (31 cases) and contract cheating (15 cases).

### Recognition for detection and reporting by faculties and schools (cases and % of enrolled students in the Faculty)

#### Faculties

1. Faculty of Engineering (261 cases or 1.3% students)
2. Faculty of Law and Justice (237 cases or 4.7% of students)
3. Faculty of Business (193 cases of 0.9% of students)

#### Schools

1. School of Computer Science and Engineering (136 cases)
2. School of Humanities and Languages (119)
3. School of Law, Society and Criminology (95)

<sup>8</sup> Source: UNSW Planning and Performance – Headcount – download at 3.15pm on 29 January 2025.

<sup>9</sup> This includes suspected cases of contract cheating or where the whole or whole sections of assessable work, including key learning points, contain generative AI output, against assessment guidelines.

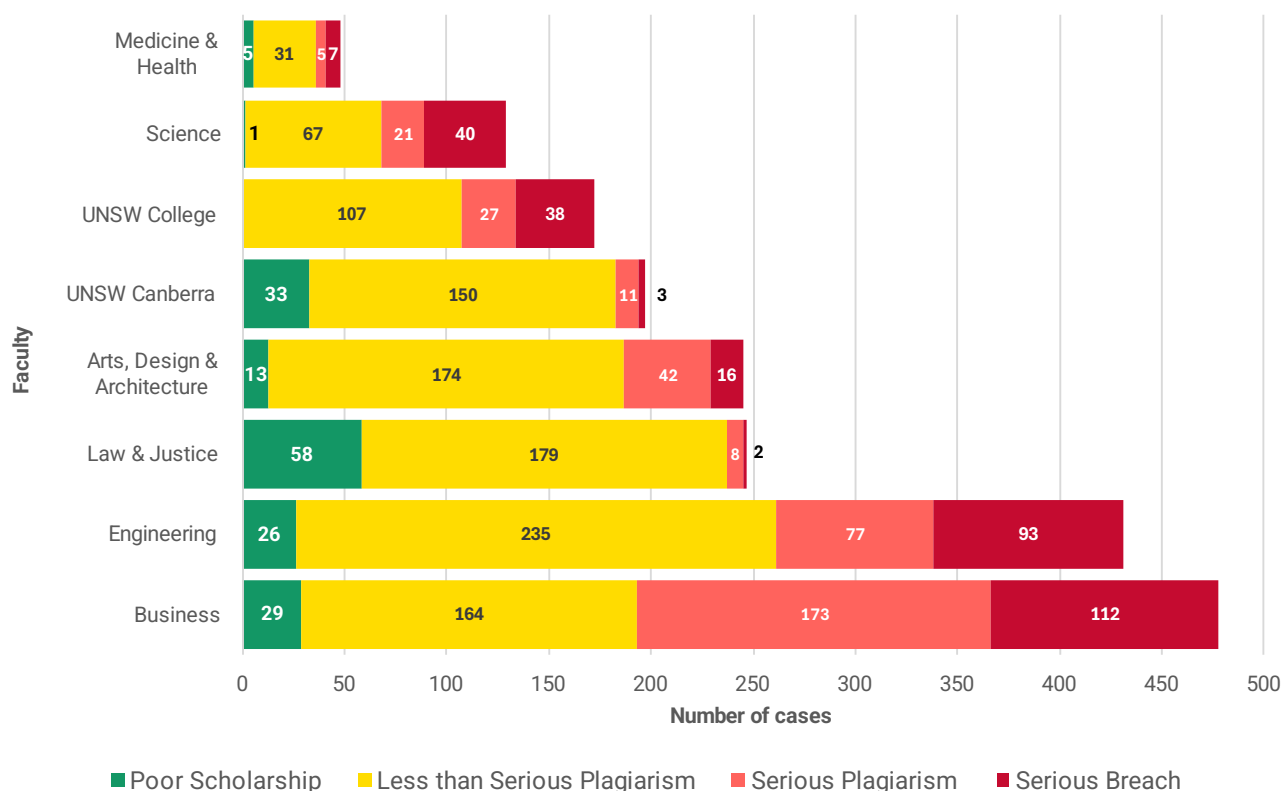


Figure 3 Plagiarism and academic misconduct cases by Faculty - excluding 9 cases which did not identify a Faculty and 20 cases in Divisions

Conduct and Integrity will continue to work with faculties and School Student Integrity Advisers to encourage and support education and detection efforts and to facilitate the recording of less serious plagiarism and to refer more serious level cases to Conduct and Integrity.

## Courses

Following is a list of courses ranked according to the number of substantiated/partially substantiated cases of plagiarism and academic misconduct:

1. Responsible Business Professionalism (MGMT5050) – 104 cases
2. Algorithms and Programming Techniques (COMP3121) – 76 cases
3. Principles of Programming (COMP9021) – 55 cases
4. Global Business Environment (COMM1150) – 52 cases
5. Business Decision Making (DPBS1100) – 51 cases

MGMT5050 continues to have the highest number of substantiated cases, with most (75% or 78) cases of serious misconduct involving contract cheating or unauthorised use of AI.

All 76 cases recorded against COMP3121 involved less serious plagiarism.

Staff responsible for these courses are commended for their vigilance, efforts in detection and reporting, and commitment to maintaining academic integrity.

## Plagiarism

As indicated in Table 2 (on page 8), almost two-thirds (64% or 1,279) of 1,983 cases substantiated and closed in 2024 involved a combination of poor scholarship (8% or 165 cases) and less serious level plagiarism (56% or 1,114 cases). There were 368 of serious level plagiarism, representing 19% of all substantiated cases in 2024 and a 59% increase in cases when compared to 2023.

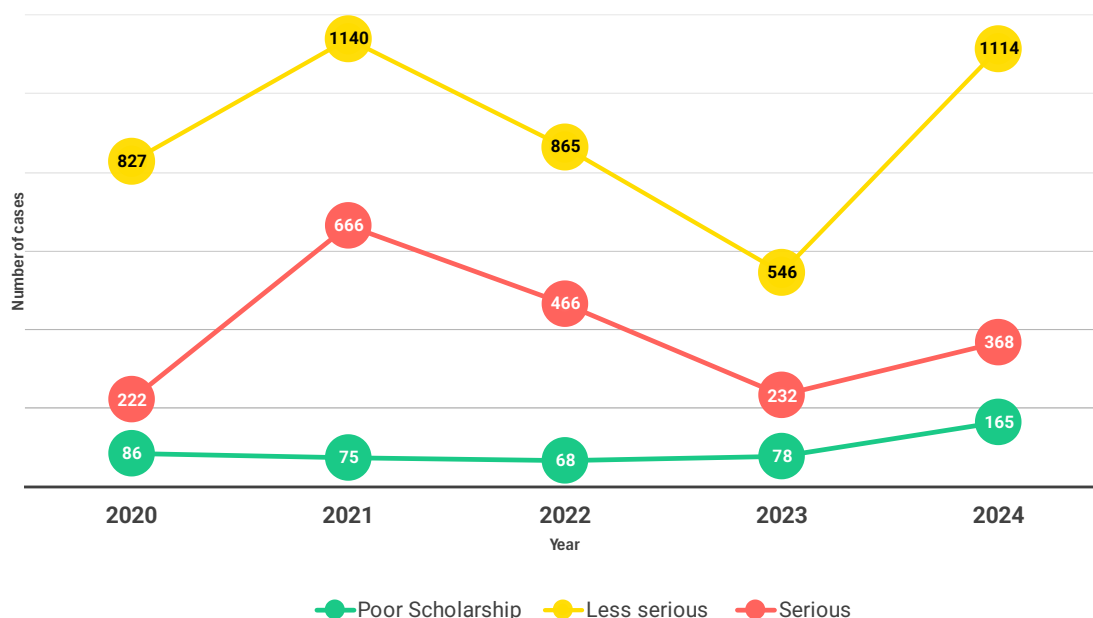


Figure 4 Annual comparison of levels of poor scholarship, less serious plagiarism and serious level plagiarism

## Unauthorised use of generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)

In 2024 the university redesigned assessments to enable AI to become part of the student learning experience and to ensure students are informed, ethical and critical users of the technology.

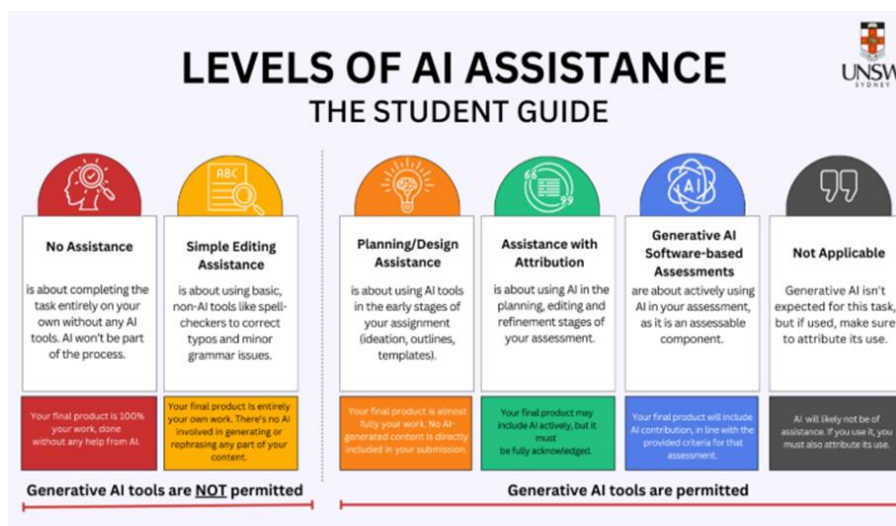


Figure 5: Guidance for students on ethical and permissible generative AI

Comprehensive assessment guidance and instructions were rolled-out over 2024 and early-2025 to guide students on permitted degrees of AI use in assessments.

While there were no reports of unauthorised use of generative AI reported in 2022, Conduct and Integrity substantiated 166 cases as serious misuse of generative AI in 2023<sup>10</sup>.

In February 2024 for the first time schools were able to case manage low-level plagiarism, including unauthorised use of

generative AI, and other similar tools, from detection-to-determination with the new case management system.

In 2024, almost a third (32% or 640) of 1,983 substantiated cases involved the unauthorised use of generative AI.

<sup>10</sup> Until late-2023, all instances of generative AI use were referred to Conduct and Integrity to manage.

As shown in Table 2 (on page 8), two-thirds (75% or 482 of 640) of substantiated cases involving unauthorised use of generative AI and similar tools were detected and managed by schools as low-level plagiarism. Most cases were detected by academics noticing the significant disparity between written work submitted and students' poor communication and/or low-class attendance.

### A question of authorship

In 2024, a significant number of cases of unauthorised AI use involved students composing their written work in their native language and then using translation, text polishing and spinning tools to convert it into English and to improve grammar. Although the university does not ban digital translators, it [advises against their use in courses/assessments where generative AI is prohibited](#). This is because these tools employ generative AI technology which alters the students' original work in the output. While they help students to better understand and engage with course content, using these applications in assessments will flag them as involving AI-generated writing.

If an assessor is uncertain whether the work is entirely the student's own, a viva voce may be conducted to determine if the student has met the assessment learning outcomes. The university's [Plagiarism Policy](#) enables assessors to manage assessments with low-level generative AI use. Serious plagiarism cases are referred to Conduct and Integrity to manage as potential student misconduct. This typically occurs where large sections or the entire work is flagged as containing AI generated output and the student is unable to speak to the course content or their submitted work.

In 2024, [Conduct and Integrity investigated and substantiated 60 cases](#) of submitted work which had been flagged by assessors as likely to be wholly or largely AI generated. While investigating one of these cases investigators discovered that the student had engaged in contract cheating across seven courses. A 'fail' grade (00FL) was applied to each of the courses, and as the student had just graduated, their degree was revoked. A permanent exclusion was also applied to their profile to prevent them re-enrolling at the university.

### Contract cheating

Contract cheating, also known as 'ghost writing', is when a student engages another person to complete work for them and then submits the work as their own. This represents a serious breach of the university's Code of Conduct and Values and is managed by Conduct and Integrity as potential student misconduct.

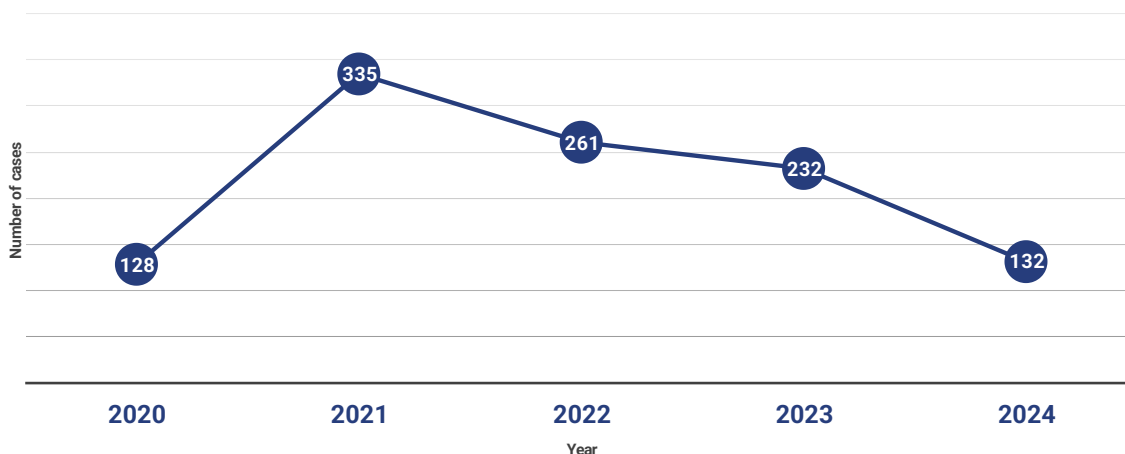


Figure 6: Annual comparison of contract cheating cases - 2020-2024.

In 2024, [Conduct and Integrity investigated and substantiated 132 cases of contract cheating](#), which represents 43% fewer cases when compared to 232 cases of contract cheating investigated in 2023. This may be attributed to UNSW's ongoing efforts in deterring the various forms of contract cheating and/or with the advent of generative AI, fewer students engaging third parties and choosing to use generative AI instead.

## A full (contract cheating) service

Since online writing company, MyMaster, was uncovered over a decade ago Conduct and Integrity has observed contract cheating providers evolving and broadening their services in recent years. This is despite – or perhaps in response to – the rise of generative AI.

### Harassment

Since early 2024, students and staff have noticed increasingly aggressive advertising tactics from contract cheating providers. Reports include a rise in the number of targeted emails to students' UNSW email addresses, promoting 'tutoring' and other assessment help; individuals positioning themselves outside lecture halls or even in classrooms, using QR codes to link to contract cheating sites; emails from senders impersonating lecturers and friends. Additionally, representatives have infiltrated student chat groups and social media to persuade students to engage their services.

In response, UNSW has increased educational initiatives, regularly advising and warning students of these tactics, has increased security presence around campus and lecture blocks, applied IT blocks, and raised these concerns with TEQSA. Students are encouraged to report solicitation by contract cheating services to course staff, Conduct and Integrity, or anonymously via the [SpeakUp](#) portal.

### Synchronous course delivery

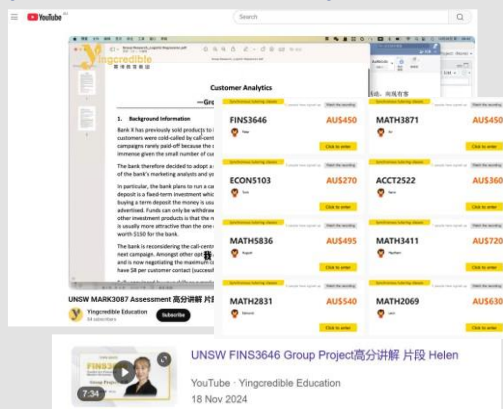


Figure 7: Online advertisement promoting synchronous UNSW courses.

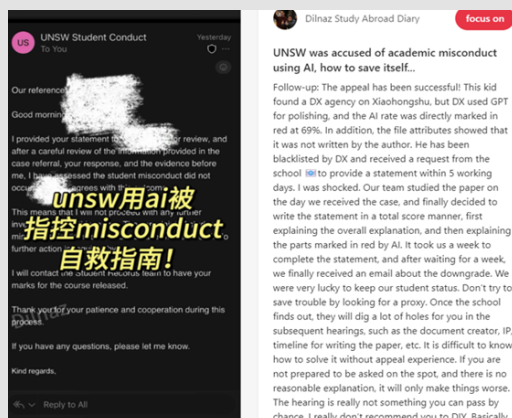


Figure 8: Example of an actual document used in an online advertisement. NOTE: Conduct and Integrity were able to trace documents in the advertisements to students.

*'It took us a week to complete the statement, and after waiting a week we finally received an email about the downgrade (in penalty) ... I really don't recommend you DIY [sic]...'*

Quote from the post in Figure 7 above

The university has previously acted against companies sharing UNSW copyrighted course content on their subscription-only websites. Recently, it identified two tutoring providers, who are suspected of offering contract cheating to students, advertising and selling UNSW courses content to UNSW international students. For example, [students can buy access to 'tutoring notes' and 'recordings' for UNSW course FINS5514 for AUD\\$607.50.](#)

An investigation into suspected collusion revealed students copied answers from notes purchased from one of the companies, with three more students later found doing the same. Additionally, these companies offer synchronous online course delivery and 'tutoring' sessions on YouTube, including one previously associated with MyMaster.

### Help responding to allegations

Conduct and Integrity also observed an increase in contract cheating providers offering help with both written assessments and responses to any misconduct allegations.

Investigators now caution students about these services, which often produce poor-quality or stock responses. Providers typically encourage students to admit to minor allegations while denying or ignoring more serious ones.

Some students have reported being blackmailed by these providers.

Allegations of contract cheating take longer to investigate as investigators uncover other historical instances of contract cheating. Of the 132 cases referred by schools for suspicious Moodle log activity (the university's on-line learning management platform), [investigators substantiated or partially substantiated 586 allegations of contract cheating](#) and sharing of login credentials with unauthorised third parties. In many cases, examination of suspicious Moodle logs typically uncover contract cheating in multiple other assessment, often in multiple courses over the course program.

In some instances, the investigation of referrals of contract cheating uncovers admission fraud, where students submit falsified documentation for entry to UNSW programs. With admission fraud links to contract cheating, investigators now routinely examine admission documents in cases of suspected contract cheating, and review submitted work of students alleged to have provided falsified documents in the admission process.

In all these cases, students have shared their login with contract cheating providers to enable the provider to access, complete and submit assignments and exams online in Moodle. This is a cyber security risk to the university as it potentially exposes the university to cyber-security attacks and jeopardises the confidentiality of course information, including course materials and the names, and course details. Conduct and Integrity worked with the Education, Technology Support and Learning Environments team to mitigate and control risks, including locking down the ability to download university email addresses of other students in the class.

## Examination misconduct

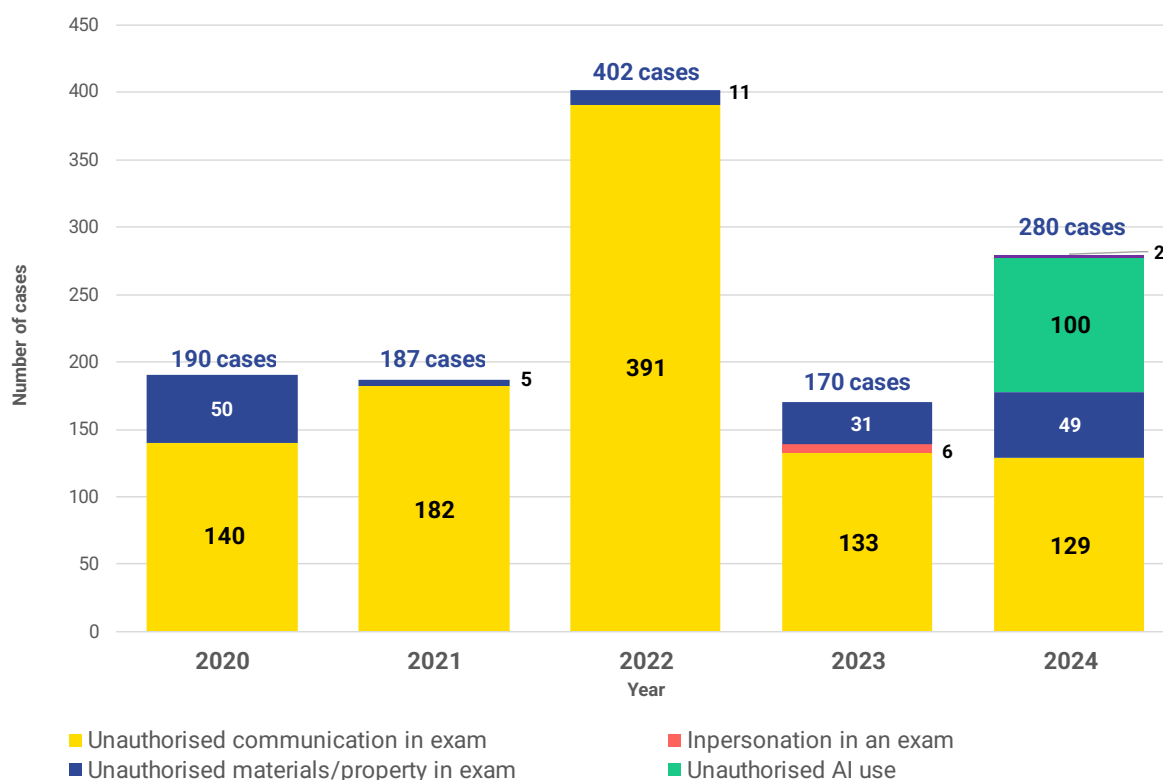


Figure 9: Annual comparison and breakdown of exam misconduct 2020-2024.

As Figure 9 shows, the university substantiated 280 cases of exam misconduct in 2024. This represents a 65% increase on the number of cases in 2023.

[Over two-thirds \(36% or 100\) of the 280 cases involved unauthorised use of generative AI.](#)

Of note is that 47 (36%) of the 129 cases of unauthorised communication involved 17 groups of between two and eight students who had engaged in collusion in an online final exam.

## Falsified documents

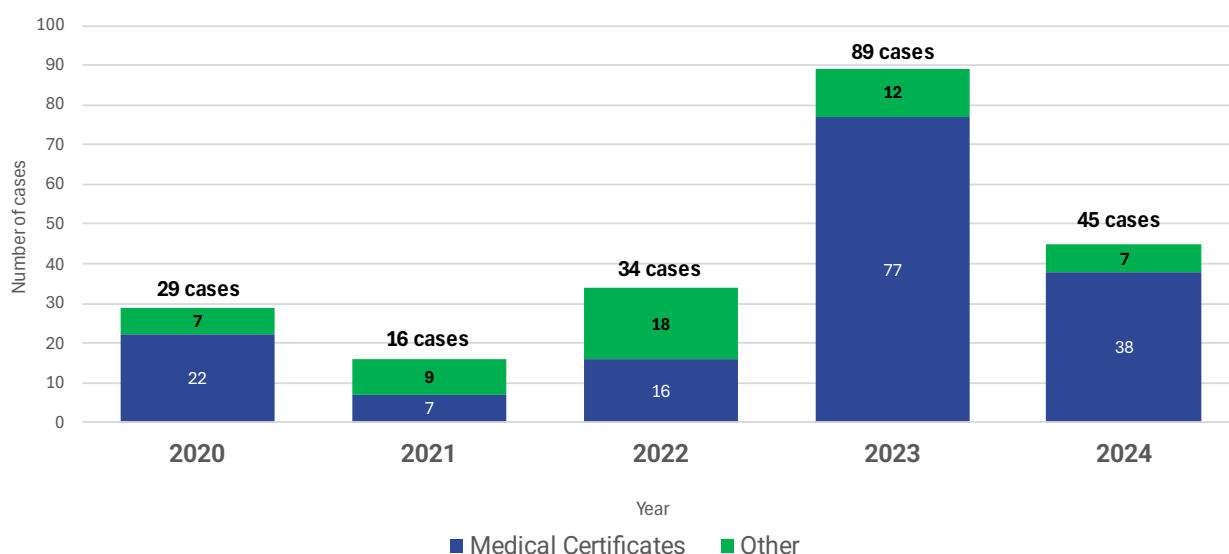


Figure 10: Annual comparison of cases of falsified course related documents 2020-2024

As shown in Figure 10, there were 45 substantiated cases of suspected falsified course related documents. Of these, **84% of cases involved falsified/fraudulent medical certificates submitted to support applications for Special Consideration.**

Other forms of falsified course documents included a case of falsified employer evaluation form as part of a work integrated learning program, and a case serious academic misconduct involving a falsified clinical assessment report.

In 2024, the university substantiated 11 cases of admissions fraud in 2024, involving false or falsified documents to support admission into the university.

Conduct and Integrity and the university's Admissions Compliance team are working together proactively to strengthen processes and compliance.

## Penalties and outcomes

As Table 4 below shows, for cases of poor scholarship students typically receive a warning with no reduction in marks for the assessment. For cases involving low-level (minor', moderate' and 'significant' level) plagiarism (which includes low-level unauthorised generative AI use), schools have typically imposed a warning with a mark reduction or marked the student's original content in the submitted work. This is consistent with outcomes applied by schools in 2023 for low-level plagiarism.

Outcome/ Penalty	School applied outcome/penalty		Conduct and Integrity applied outcome/penalty		TOTAL
	Poor Scholarship	Low-level Plagiarism	Serious plagiarism	Serious Breach of the Code	
No penalty			1		1
Warning without mark reduction	86	58			144
<b>Warning with mark reduction</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>198</b>			<b>254</b>
Remedial educative action only	6	13			19
Resubmit <u>without</u> mark reduction	9	22			31
Resubmit <u>with</u> mark reduction	7	130			137
Resubmit and mark capped at 50%		149			149
Resubmit with grade drop		2			2
Resubmit or correct work with a capped mark			3	1	4
Mark original content disregarding plagiarised parts	7	181	1	1	190
Mark capped at 50%		139	12	19	170
Other reduction in marks		1		11	12
<b>0% (Fail) for assessment</b>		<b>257</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>735</b>
Reduction in marks as prescribed by university policy or procedure			1		1
Formal reprimand/ warning			9	23	32
<b>00FL (Fail) for course</b>			<b>511</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>551</b>
Delayed graduation			2		2
Suspension from university			12	1	13
Permanent exclusion			28	7	35
Excluded Misconduct Grade (EM)			28		28
Revocation of award (e.g. certificate, diploma, degree, scholarship)			1		1
Not recorded			10	4	14

Table 4: Penalties and outcomes applied to substantiated cases of poor scholarship, plagiarism and academic misconduct in 2024

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. student will have received a record of a single penalty of 00FL even if they receive 00FL for each of the 10 courses they have been found to have cheated in).

The **most common outcome was a penalty/outcome of 0% for the assessment** for single instances of less serious, serious plagiarism and serious academic breaches of the university's Code of Conduct and Values. Both the schools and Conduct and Integrity issued this outcome a total of 735 times in 2024.. In most cases this penalty/outcome is issued by Conduct and Integrity as a reduced penalty when a student chooses to admit to the alleged misconduct as part of a *Courageous Conversation* (as described on page 5). Where

students do not make a full and upfront admission, and an investigation subsequently substantiates the allegation, then a Fail (00FL) for the course is the standard penalty for a single instance of misconduct. This was issued 551 times in 2024.

### **Suspensions and permanent exclusion**

Suspensions are a severe penalty and applied only in cases involving the most serious or repeated breaches of the university's Code of Conduct and Values. In 2024, there were 13 suspensions issued (0.02% of enrolled students). This is consistent with the 17 suspensions issued in 2023 (0.02% of enrolled students), and as a proportion of enrolled students in 2022 with four suspensions issued.

Exclusion from the university is a last resort penalty and are only applied to the most egregious behaviour – commonly applied to instances of admission fraud, large scale contract cheating, and serious behavioural breaches of the Code of Conduct and Values. In 2024, there were 35 permanent exclusions (0.04% of enrolled students). This is consistent as a proportion of enrolled students, with 33 permanent exclusions applied in 2023 (0.05% of enrolled students) and 38 in 2022 (0.06% of enrolled students). The university also applied 'Excluded (for) Misconduct' (EM) grade to the transcripts in 28 cases of permanent exclusions to indicate the reason for exclusion. UNSW is the only Group of Eight university which applies this mark for academic misconduct.

## NON-ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

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

In 2024 the university received a record high of 101 reports of non-academic misconduct and **closed 84 cases**. Almost all cases related to student conduct toward another person.

As illustrated by Figure 10, just over half of cases raised did not proceed to investigation. In most of these cases students were issued with an informal caution or warning as educative action. Of the 38 cases investigated by Conduct and Integrity **30 (36%) cases were substantiated or partially substantiated**.

As indicated by Figure 11, this represents 50% more cases than the previous year, and significantly higher than in previous years. Just under two-thirds (60% or 18) of the 30 cases involved unacceptable conduct toward another person or anti-social behaviour. Cases included:

- groups of intoxicated students engaging in antisocial behaviour
- students being verbally aggressive toward staff
- a student sending an offensive email to 2,300 student university email addresses

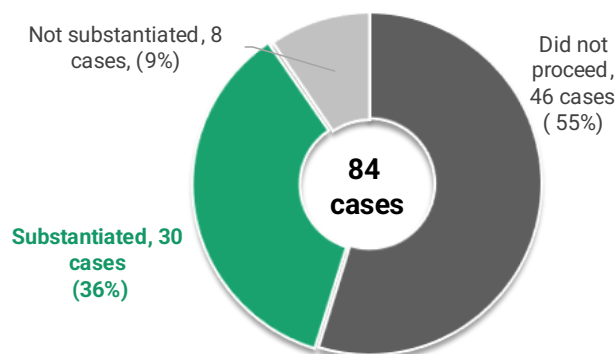


Figure 11: All non-academic misconduct cases closed in 2024

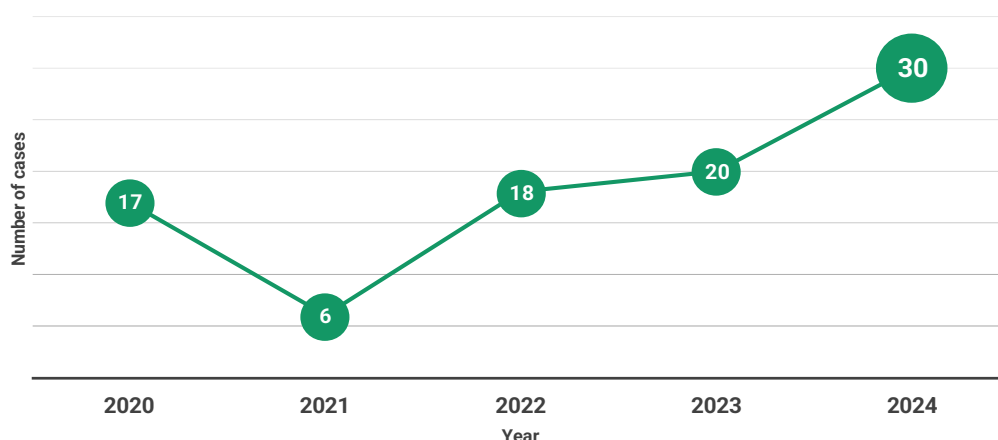


Figure 12: Annual comparison of substantiated student non-academic breaches of the university's Code of Conduct and Values.

### Penalties and outcomes

Penalty/outcome	Number
No formal action	1
Formal reprimand/warning	26
Fail (00FL)	1
Delayed graduation	1
Permanent exclusion	1

Table 5: Penalties and outcome for non-academic misconduct. NOTE: More than one penalty may apply.

As Table 6 above shows, the most common outcome for non-academic misconduct was a formal reprimand or warning of more serious action if the conduct is repeated or there is a further instance of misconduct substantiated. A student involved in physical violence was able to complete their study program but faced a delay on their graduation and a permanent ban on further study (permanent exclusion) at the university.

## STUDENT COMPLAINTS

This part of the report examines student complaints recorded in the university's central complaints and case management system.

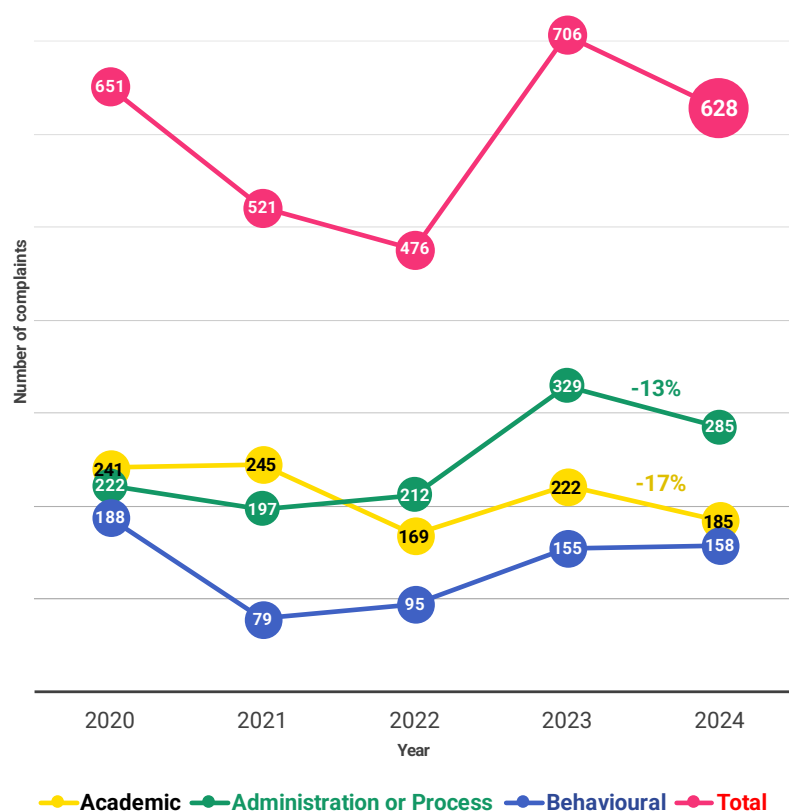


Figure 13: Annual comparison of the number and type of complaints received over 2020-2024.

In 2024, the university received 628 student complaints, representing a 12% drop on the 711 complaints received in 2023.

As Figure 12 shows, the number of complaints dropped across all categories, with 17% fewer course or academic related complaints received in 2024 when compared to 2023.

### Faculty

Most (26% or 166) of 628 complaints received were raised anonymously or did not identify with a university faculty. As Figure 13 shows of those complaints which identified a faculty, the two largest faculties at the university, Faculties of Engineering and Business received the most number of complaints – with 126 and 86 complaints respectively. For large faculties, most complaints were academic, or course related, representing 47% (60 of 126 complaints) and 55% (47 of 86 complaints) respectively.

In 2024, the university closed 533 complaints. This represents a 20% drop from 670 complaints closed in 2023. This may be attributable to the increasing complexity of complaints received which require longer to resolve. Table 6 below shows the focus of most student complaints were about student behaviour, which is consistent with the 78 complaints received in 2023. Notably, the number of complaints about assessment marking and design dropped by 50% compared to 2023. There were 23% fewer complaints about Special Consideration compared to 2023. This may be due to the introduction of Short Extension which was introduced in mid-2023. This new process allows an extension of between one and seven days for brief life-disrupting events for some assessments. Complaints about course instruction and feedback were consistent previous year.

Academic	Administration/process	Behaviour
Assessment – marking (76)	Special consideration (54)	Student behaviour (86)
Assessment – design (20)	Fees (37)	Staff conduct (59)
Course feedback (20)	Examinations (27)	Student academic conduct (2)
Course instruction (19)	Administration (27)	
Academic behaviour (8)	Admissions (26)	

Table 6: Categorisation of the most frequent complaints received in 2024

## Outcomes

Of the complaints closed in 2024:

- 395 complaints did not proceed to investigation. Typically, it is because they were:
  - referred to another process, business area, or school to manage and resolve at the local level
  - withdrawn by the complainant
  - closed with no action required
  - resolved with a response to the complainant
- 51 were enquiries or feedback
- 87 complaints were investigated and closed, of which:
  - 27 were resolved or partially resolved
  - 26 had concerns substantiated or partially substantiated
  - 34 had concerns which were unsubstantiated or unable to be substantiated; and

## INTERNAL REVIEWS

At the conclusion of a complaints process or investigation, a person affected by a decision made about a complaint may seek a review on the grounds of a lack of procedural fairness or where there is new and exceptional information that was not available at the time of the investigation.

A request for review may not be made about the merits of a decision, that is, simply because the individual does not agree with the determination and/or penalty. Information on how to request an internal review is provided in all written notification of the outcome of a case. If the individual is still dissatisfied after the procedural review they may raise it with an external body, such as the NSW or Commonwealth Ombudsman<sup>11</sup>.

In 2024, the university received 30 requests for internal reviews of investigations undertaken by Conduct and Integrity. These internal review requests were carefully assessed by the UNSW Legal and Compliance team, for recommendation to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Education and Student Experience with the following outcomes:

- 21 (70%) were not upheld and dismissed
- Eight (27%) were upheld with the process to be conducted anew
- One (3%) was upheld with alternative outcome.

Of note is that internal reviews have been sought in 2% of cases investigated and determined by Conduct and Integrity in 2024, and 0.7% were upheld.

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<sup>11</sup> Following its establishment in February 2025, students are now advised that they may raise their concerns with the National Student Ombudsman.

## CONDUCT AND INTEGRITY RESOLUTION TIMEFRAMES

Conduct and Integrity comprises investigators-case managers with a range of diverse skills, experience and expertise essential for detecting and managing student complaints and misconduct. Through continuous professional development, improvement of detection tools, methods and processes the team continues to be at the forefront in detecting and managing serious student misconduct.

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

- **Volume of matters on hand**  
Typically, Conduct and Integrity receives the bulk of case referrals from schools after final exams each Term.
- **Case complexity**  
As indicated previously, Conduct and Integrity typically uncover historical instances of contract cheating as it investigates cases referred 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 at each stage of an investigation. Timeframes may be drawn out where students do not engage in the process, or request extensions in time, to respond.

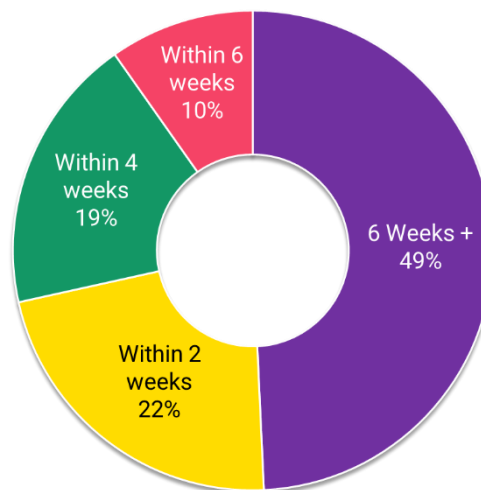


Figure 14: Average timeframe for closing *serious misconduct cases*

Cases involving serious breaches of the Code of Conduct and Values, especially contract cheating often take longer to investigate. Examples of serious misconduct cases which took over six weeks to finalise in 2024 included:

- a complex matter involving eight students whose assessments were detected as being largely or wholly produced using generative AI.
- an investigation of a student who had engaged in contract cheating in 18 courses over their study program.
- exam misconduct involving a Discord chat during a Term 3 final exam.
- a student referred for aggressive, abusive behaviour and threats of physical violence.

As Figure 15 shows, most (59%) complaints are resolved within two weeks. This is a drop from 80% in 2023 and a reflection of the increasing number of serious complaints resolved in 2024.

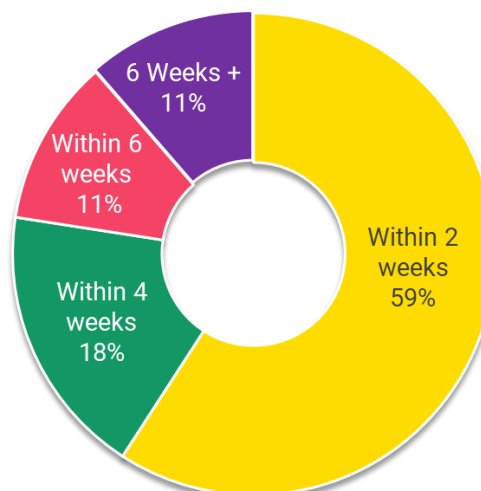


Figure 15: Average timeframes for closing a *student complaint*

Resolution of complaints about student behaviour, especially where they involve sexual assaults and academic misconduct, take longer to resolve, representing 2% of cases taking six or more weeks to resolve.

NOTE: Information on the length of time taken to resolve complaints at a local level was not available as there were no local level complaints recorded in the complaint-case management system for 2024 at the time of reporting.

### Median days to resolve most frequent types of complaints

Student behaviour – 9 days

Assessment marking – 10.5 days

Special Consideration – 14 days

## KEY DEVELOPMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

A range of activities and events are held each year by the university to promote, inform and educate students and staff on the upholding academic integrity, including quarterly meetings with Arc@UNSW and the Student Representative Council to share developments; and raise and discuss any concerns about student integrity and complaints.

Following are some of the many activities, events, developments, activities and achievements over 2024.

### Information and awareness



Launch of UNSW's [SpeakUp campaign](#), which describes some of the behaviour expected by the university across six focus areas, including student conduct and academic integrity.



### Engagement and education



'LET'S Meet' co-presentation by the Learning and Digital Environment and Conduct and Integrity teams to academic staff on the use of tools and techniques to uphold academic integrity in January, May

[Presentations on academic integrity:](#)

- to the Teacher Accelerator Program
- at a Co-op Welcome session
- at the International Student Welcome

[Conduct and Integrity presentations on academic integrity](#) to Law and Justice, Higher Degree Research students

[Conduct and Integrity presentation on academic integrity](#) to Peer Assisted Study Scheme (PASS) Student Leaders

[Conduct and Integrity presentation on academic integrity](#) to Faculty of Arts, Design and Architecture School Student Integrity Advisers (SSIA) Community of Practice in July

[Conduct and Integrity presentation on academic integrity](#) in August to:

- the Law and Justice Faculty Board
- the Faculty of Arts, Design and Architecture School Student Integrity Advisers (SSIA) Community of Practice



SpeakUp [stall at Term 3 Orientation Week](#) to raise awareness about speaking up and raising concerns with the university when student see or experience anything that falls short of the university's expected behaviours set out in its Code of Conduct and Values.



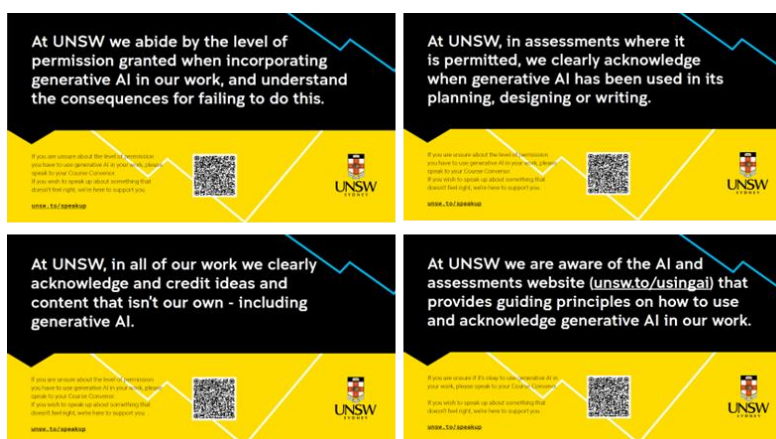
**Conduct and Integrity presentation** in October to:

- Teaching Commons on 'Fundamentals of AI Detection'
- Faculty of Business Partners on 'Conduct and Integrity and What We Do'



In addition to engagement and activities throughout the year, UNSW conducts an Academic Integrity campaign annually in October, to correspond with the International Centre for Academic's (ICAI) annual International Day Against Contract Cheating. During the **2024 Academic Integrity campaign**:

All Centrally Allocated Teaching Spaces (CATS) and centrally controlled Audio-Visual screens in common areas across the university's campuses featured hold-screens setting out expected academic conduct and encouraging staff and students to speak up if they observed unacceptable conduct.



- **International Day Against Contract Cheating: Don't fall for the trap!** Article in UNSW's student newsletter.



- Information stall outside the UNSW Library with PASS Student Leaders. Students were invited to share **what academic integrity means to them**



- **Conduct and Integrity presentation** in December 2024 at Teaching Commons – Fundamentals of AI Detection
- Conduct and Integrity meeting with Adam Day 'The Papermill Alarm'
- **Conduct and Integrity presentation** to the AGSM on complaint and misconduct basics

## Systems and governance



New [Code of Conduct and Values](#) replacing the Student Code of Conduct, Research Code of Conduct and staff Code of Conduct.



Launch of the university's [Complaints Management and Investigations Policy and Procedure](#) in February 2024, which replaced the:

- Complaint Management Policy
- Student Complaint Procedure
- Student Misconduct Procedure
- Research Misconduct Procedure
- Staff Complaint Procedure
- Complaint Management Procedure (External); and
- Unreasonable Complainant Conduct Procedure.

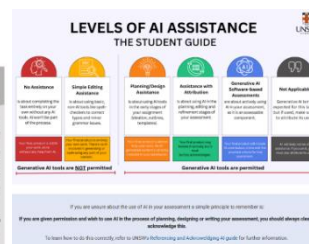


Launch of the [university's new complaint and case management system](#) for recording and managing student plagiarism, as well as all complaints and reports of misconduct.

## Resources



Launch of [Ethical and Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence at UNSW](#), online guidance for students on how to use Gen AI responsibly in their studies. This includes a simple student guide on levels of AI assistance which may be used in the process planning, creating and producing assignments.



A more detailed [visual guidebook](#) for students is also available to guide students on how to effectively and responsibly use Gen AI, when is permitted. The guide includes examples of prompts and outputs, AI use checklist and how to reference its use in assessments,



Conduct and Integrity continues to [develop and improve its range of sophisticated technology tools to identify unauthorised access to UNSW systems and to detect abnormalities in assessment submissions.](#)



Single point of recording all complaints and for case management launched across the university.

## Prevention and deterrence



Efforts to [counter contract cheating services](#), including:

- [Alerting students](#) to contract cheating providers when identified
- [Blocking direct marketing](#) of contract cheating services to student UNSW addresses when identified
- Working with Arc@UNSW and UNSW Protective services to [prevent contract cheating provider representatives, advertising and activities on campus](#) at O-Week events and contract cheating service touts on campus.

## 2025 UNSW ENTERPRISE RISKS AND CONTROLS

UNSW's enterprise risk register in 2025 identifies that **unethical behaviour erodes UNSW's reputation and social license to operate and devalues degrees (#08)** as one of the university's top operational risks. The table below sets out current and emerging risks identified by this report and sets out controls that are in place to mitigate and manage the risks.

Risk factor	Description	Mitigation and/or control
<b>Poor student understanding of academic integrity</b>	Poor understanding of academic integrity leading some students to inadvertently cheating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued focus on raising student awareness and understanding of the importance of academic integrity</li> <li>Continue with targeted education campaign focused on expected behaviours to uphold academic integrity</li> <li>Ongoing and explicit instructions and guidelines on use of translation and text spinning tools, most of which employ generative AI technology.</li> <li>Continue to collaborate with Arc@UNSW and student representatives to develop and implement student generated communication on the importance of academic integrity</li> <li>Continue to participate and contribute to TEQSA activities on managing contract cheating in higher education.</li> </ul>
<b>Pressure to gain admission to UNSW and to succeed</b>	<p>Admission fraud is linked to student contract cheating</p> <p>Students struggling academically become susceptible to offers of assessment help</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain vigilance in back-to-source checks of admission documents</li> <li>Quality standards and checks of recruitment agents</li> <li>Continue back-to-source check on admission documents of students found to have engaged in contract cheating.</li> <li>Academic skills support, including Peer Assisted Study Scheme (PASS), academic skills resources and study hack workshops, are available for those students who will benefit from specific support.</li> <li>Psychology and wellness services to support students</li> </ul>
<b>Technological advances making in harder to detect cheating</b>	Unauthorised use of generative AI tools will be more difficult to detect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to provide students with information, education and clear course and assessment guidance on when and how to use generative AI responsibly</li> <li>Continue to work with Turnitin and other providers to continuously improve detection and management of unauthorised use of generative AI</li> <li>PVCE, schools and Conduct and Integrity to continue to collaborate on improving assessment design and strengthening detection and management skills</li> <li>Continue to monitor and harness developments in generative AI</li> <li>Maintain professional relationships with TEQSA, academic integrity networks and other expertise</li> </ul>
<b>Third-party access to UNSW systems by contract cheaters</b>	<p>Cybersecurity breach of UNSW systems as students provide contract cheating providers with their UNSW login details.</p> <p>Contract cheating providers obtaining student email addresses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to raise student awareness of contract cheating companies and individuals disguised as tutoring service providers and the risks of sharing their login details.</li> <li>Continue to work with UNSW Cybersecurity teams to mitigate and manage breaches and risks</li> <li>Introduce mandatory student training to educate new students on cybersecurity risks.</li> </ul>

<b>Risk factor</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Mitigation and/or control</b>
<b>Expansion of contracting cheating services</b>	Rapid evolution of contract cheating services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuous improvement in detection and investigation capability – in staff skills and expertise in use of new technology.</li> <li>• Ongoing development and improvement of the university's range of data analysis tools to identify unauthorised access to UNSW systems, and detection of contract cheating and unauthorised use of generative AI in submitted assessments.</li> <li>• Ongoing collaboration with experts of metadata analysis to detect signs of potential contract cheating</li> <li>• Continue to alert students to scams and contract cheating impersonation when identified</li> <li>• Working with UNSW IT to block contract cheating provider emails when detected</li> <li>• Educating staff and students on how to report contract cheating advertisements</li> <li>• Working with schools to strengthen assessment design to minimise the risk of integrity breaches</li> <li>• Review the university's Complaints Management and Investigation Policy and Procedure and case management system to simplify and streamline record keeping and reduce the administrative burden of managing plagiarism and academic misconduct.</li> </ul>
<b>Complex misconduct and complaints</b>	Complex cases taking longer to investigate and resolve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate allocation of resources across the university</li> <li>• Continue to develop educational resources targeted at preventing and deterring cheating.</li> </ul>