Student Academic Integrity

2023 Annual Report

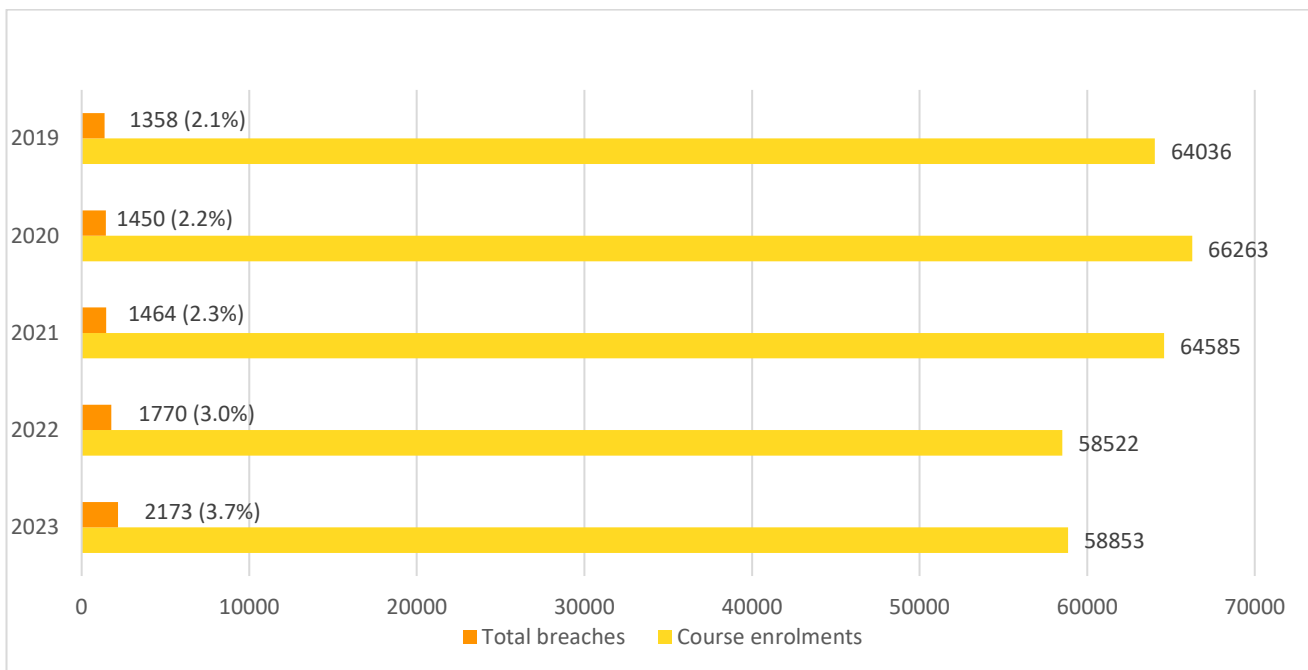*Student Success* Division, Deakin University

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 2023 academic year.
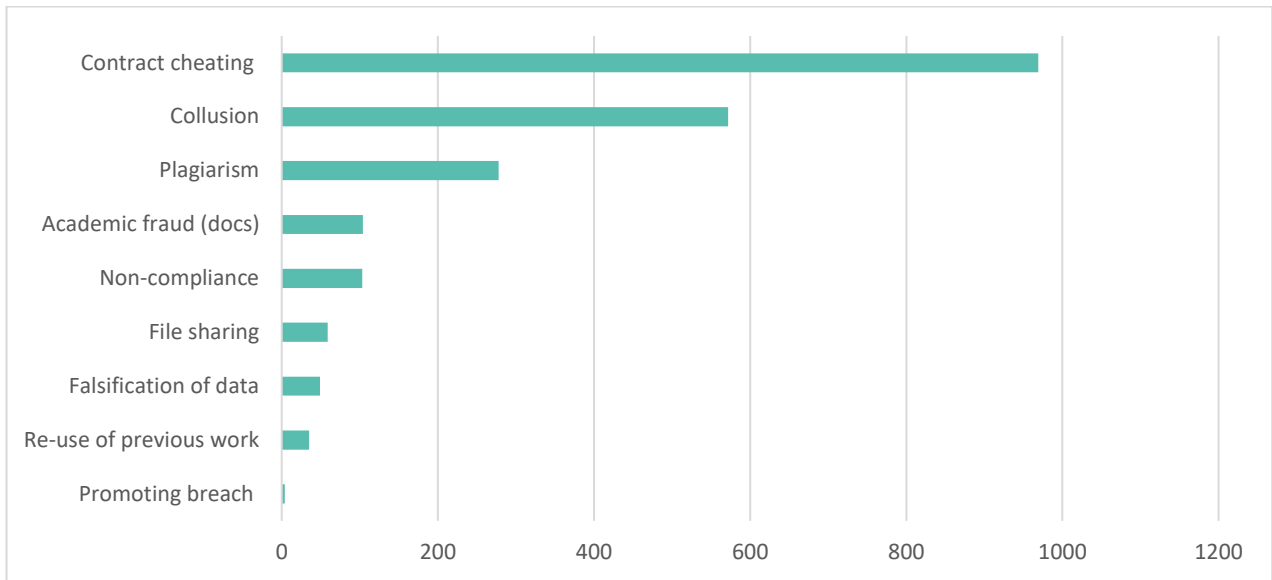
Detection of student breaches of academic integrity in 2023

In 2023, the number of student academic integrity breaches detected (n=2173), and the number of detected breaches as a percentage of total course enrolments (3.7%), continued to increase compared to previous years (**Chart 1** below).
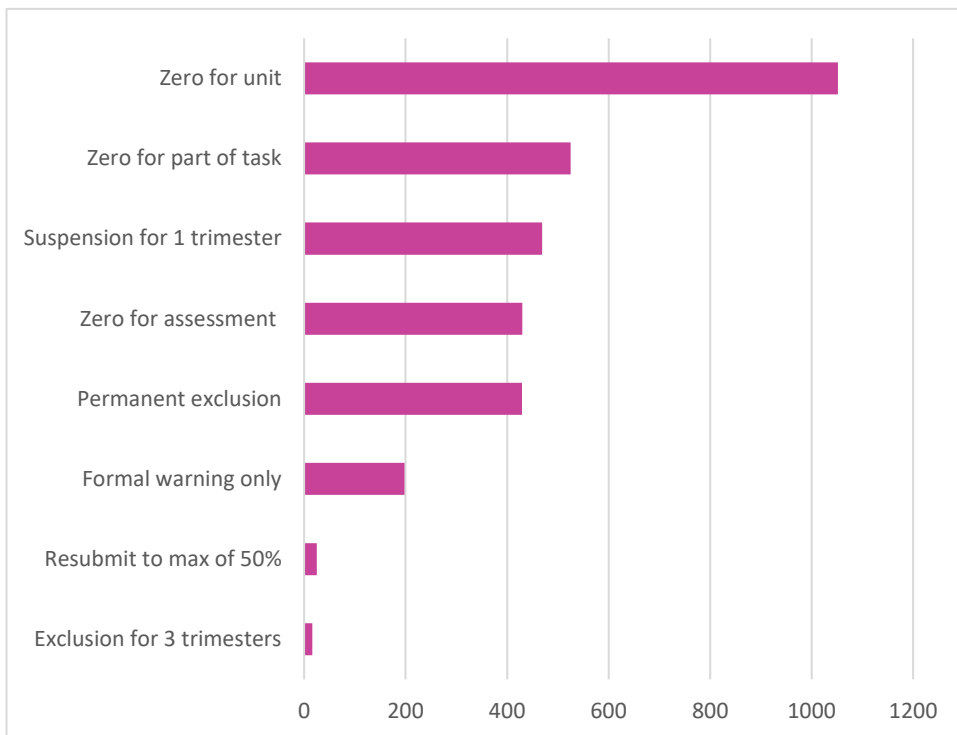

Chart 1: Student academic integrity breaches against total course enrolments 2019-2023

Chart 2 below shows the number of breaches of each type in 2023. Due to the introduction in 2023 of a structured and centrally recorded early intervention for poor academic practice (n=800), for the first time the most common academic integrity breach detected across the University was not plagiarism but contract cheating: 969 cases, 45% of all breaches detected. Over the past five years, contract cheating detection has risen significantly at Deakin due to the introduction of new and proactive detection methods. In 2019, Deakin detected 99 cases of contract cheating (7% of all detected breaches); this rose in 2020 to 197 cases (14%); in 2021 to 232 cases (16%), and in 2022 to 514 cases (29%).

Chart 2: Detected student academic integrity breaches by type in 2023

Chart 3 shows the range of outcomes across the University for students found to have breached academic integrity in 2023. Individual students receiving multiple allegations received a separate outcome for each substantiated breach. The most common outcome (34%) for a detected breach was zero for the unit. In 2023, 129 students received an outcome of either suspension for one trimester or exclusion for three trimesters due to breaching student academic integrity. Thirty-two students received an outcome of permanent exclusion from the University.

Chart 3: Student academic integrity breach outcomes in 2022

In 2023, 4% (n=96) of Faculty Academic Integrity Committee decisions were appealed, compared to 5% in 2022. The majority (92%, n=88) of these appeals were dismissed prior to hearing. Of the eight appeals heard by the University Appeals Committee, six were upheld (6% of total appeals, compared to 15% in 2022).

Summary of key issues in 2023

Key issues in 2023	Commentary and actions to address key issues
Effectiveness of proposing standard outcomes in allegation letters to students	The majority (59%) of student breaches of academic integrity in 2023 were substantiated via offering the standard outcome for the breach without requirement for review meeting. This approach, introduced in 2023's revised Student Academic Integrity procedure, has substantially reduced Faculty Academic Integrity Committee time processing those cases and led to a swifter and more effective outcome for students.
Low proportion of units in which breaches are detected	In 2023 there was no significant increase in rate of breach detection in units (19%) compared to previous years. However, this rate does not include 800 cases of poor academic practice by eligible students that were processed through the structured early intervention approach (introduced in early 2023 via a revised Student Academic Integrity procedure) rather than being referred to a Faculty Academic Integrity Committee as alleged plagiarism. Future breach detection is increasingly likely to focus on proactive detection techniques applied by a central team in the Student Success Division rather than reliance on educators' detection.
Contract cheating detection	Contract cheating detection continued to increase substantially in 2023, building on the trend of increasing detection in recent years due to Deakin's introduction of proactive, at-scale detection tools. There will be ongoing and systematic implementation of proactive contract cheating detection methods by the Student Success Division after each study period, with priority given in the first instance to intervention for suspected historical contract cheating by students due to graduate.
Student academic integrity breaches associated with inappropriate use of generative artificial intelligence	Detected breaches involving unethical use of genAI by students in 2023 were low (n= 27), but true rates may be higher as students admitting to a breach allegation for plagiarism, contract cheating or falsification could, under the Student Academic Integrity procedure, accept a standard outcome without being required to provide further information which may have detected unethical genAI use. The University's capabilities in genAI prevention, detection and response are rapidly expanding and we anticipate higher rates of detection of inappropriate use of genAI in assessment in future.
Student self-reporting	Deakin's revised Student Academic Integrity procedure in 2023 allowed a new provision for students to self-report instances where they felt they had breached student academic integrity standards. Throughout 2023, two students self-reported potential breaches. One of these was dismissed as not being a breach, while the other proceeded as a breach with mitigating circumstances applied as specified under the procedure. The Student Success Division will continue to work with Student Services, Faculty Academic Integrity Committee Chairs and Deakin University Student Association to enhance promotion to students of the self-report option for student breaches of academic integrity.