Title Name
Position
Organisation
Address (email or postal)

Dear <<Title>> <<Last name>>

Protecting Sector Integrity: Adapting to generative artificial intelligence, and an update on activities to combat industrial-scale cheating

With the 2023 academic year about to commence, TEQSA is keenly aware of the extensive discussion and institutional responses occurring in response to the release of the generative **artificial intelligence** (AI) tool, ChatGPT, in November 2022.

The rapid enhancement in AI presents significant opportunities to support learning and increase efficiency in a range of ways. Institutions must balance the best way to leverage the benefits while mitigating the risks that generative AI presents to academic integrity. In particular, the power of generative AI tools requires a deep rethink of approaches to teaching and learning and assessment practices and how higher education institutions are ensuring that students have attained the skills and knowledge they need to graduate with their awards.

You will recall that I wrote to you in March of 2022 highlighting the impending release of powerful AI tools and urging institutions to ensure that their academic integrity policies and communication with students were responding to contemporary circumstances. Some institutions have responded actively to the challenges and are now well placed to respond to generative AI. We also all recognise that the knowledge and expertise to address AI challenges resides in our institutions. TEQSA is keen in that context to engage with stakeholders across the sector to understand the different approaches that are being taken to both seize the opportunities and mitigate the risks presented by AI.

While much of the focus of media attention to date has been on the threat that generative AI poses to academic integrity, it is important that discussions within institutions also consider the broader ethical implications posed by use of AI in teaching and learning. Such issues include the use of AI by academics to set, grade or provide feedback on assessment tasks. Equally important is the potential use of AI by researchers to write grant applications, analyse data or write scientific papers. Nor should we overlook the privacy and intellectual property issues that arise in uploading student assessment tasks to third party platforms that promise to detect content generated by AI.

TEQSA will be holding a series of **AI webinars** commencing in February that will bring together a range of experts from our sector to support consideration of these and related issues. The webinars will be held in partnership with Deakin University's Centre for Research in Assessment and Digital Learning (CRADLE). Further details will be available shortly. It goes almost without saying that these discussions need to take place at all levels of governance and result, ultimately, in institutional decisions around boundaries of use – for both staff and students - that are promulgated through policies, procedures and communication plans.

It is also timely to provide you with an update on TEQSA's efforts, through our Higher Education Integrity Unit (HEIU), to disrupt **commercial academic cheating services** and to remind institutions that the threat posed by illegal academic cheating services persists.

During 2022 TEQSA worked with Australia's internet service providers to block access to 150 of the most visited websites that offered or advertised commercial cheating services. These websites were collectively

receiving well over 500,000 visits per month from Australian users. TEQSA has continued to leverage the productive relationships that we have forged with major social media platforms and online marketplaces, resulting in over 700 promotions for academic cheating services being removed from platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Gumtree.

In November 2022 TEQSA, in collaboration with Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI), launched the Global Academic Integrity Network to provide a platform for regulatory agencies around the world to share intelligence and best practice approaches to protecting the reputation and integrity of national skills and education systems.

As a sector we will continue our efforts to ensure that higher education staff and senior leaders in all institutions have a thorough understanding of the 'push and pull' factors that impact students' decisions to cheat, as well the detection techniques that can help institutions identify and respond to this type of academic misconduct.

To support the sector, TEQSA will soon be launching an **online masterclass to deter and detect contract cheating**. The course, consisting of seven modules, has been developed by Australia's leading researchers and practitioners. TEQSA will facilitate a national roadshow of 'in person' workshops for interested participants of the course, that will provide further opportunities for networking and discussion of threats to academic integrity, including those posed by artificial intelligence.

If you would like to know more or wish to discuss artificial intelligence or academic integrity issues with TEQSA, please contact Dr Helen Gniel, Director, Higher Education Integrity Unit by emailing integrityunit@teqsa.gov.au.

We look forward to continuing our partnership in this challenging area, and will be forwarding registration details for both the AI webinars and contract cheating masterclass in the coming weeks.

Best wishes for the 2023 academic year.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Peter Coaldrake AO
Chief Commissioner
1 February 2023