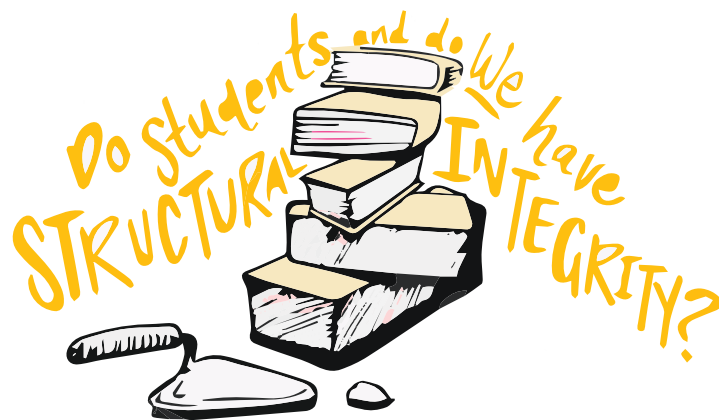
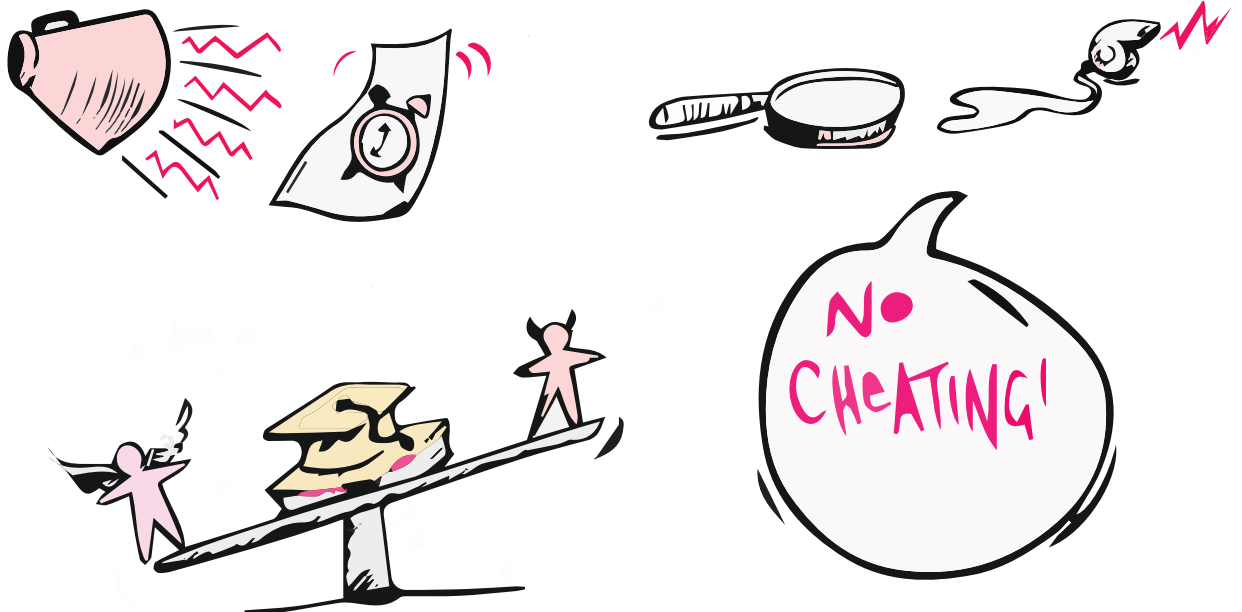


Toolkit to support quality assurance agencies to address academic integrity and contract cheating

Contract Cheating



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Contacts

More information about INQAAHE is available at: inqaahe.org

Comments and enquiries about this toolkit may be directed to: secretariat@inqaahe.org

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Foreword

This *Toolkit to support quality assurance agencies to address academic integrity and contract cheating* (2020) has been developed to share Australia's lessons with our colleagues in quality assurance agencies in the global fight against contract cheating and other threats to academic integrity.

Academic integrity and the threat posed by contract cheating are global issues in higher education that are not bound by country or region. While student cheating is not new, the rapid developments in technology and social media have enabled new methods of cheating and breaching academic integrity standards. Such advancements and capabilities have highlighted the need for higher education providers and regulators to be vigilant in protecting the integrity of their higher education systems, and safeguarding their reputation nationally and internationally.

As Australia's higher education regulator, the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) is working in partnership with international quality assurance agencies, providers, academics, higher education experts and students, both to educate the sector regarding the issues surrounding breaches of academic integrity, and to explore and develop a range of preventative measures in the fight against them.

This toolkit has been developed as a useful reference for staff working in quality assurance agencies, as regulators and in government departments, who are considering how best to develop various approaches to tackle the challenges in this fast evolving and sophisticated area of cheating. Importantly, the toolkit is a starting point and can be customised by users over time.

I encourage colleagues working in quality assurance globally to continue to confront issues threatening the integrity of higher education, and to protect our students (and, ultimately, confidence in the sector) by applying this toolkit.

This toolkit was developed as the result of an International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) Capacity Building Project. I would like to acknowledge and thank Dr Helen Gniel, Senior Advisor, Quality and Standards, Monash University, for her outstanding work in its development. Dr Gniel's commitment to addressing breaches of academic integrity shines through in the toolkit. Second, I would like to thank my colleagues within the Quality Beyond Boundaries (QBBG), a network of international quality assurance agencies, formed to address the growing quality assurance challenges and opportunities associated with cross-border higher education, who formed the Steering Group for this project. Third, I would also like to acknowledge my colleagues at TEQSA: Rosemary Marcon, Tom Hewitt-McManus and Dr Karen Treloar, who were able to bring this project to fruition against a backdrop of numerous competing deadlines.

I commend this toolkit as one of many instruments that will be needed in the future to combat the fast evolving and challenging issues of academic integrity and contract cheating in education, in collaboration with our partners throughout the world.

Professor Nick Saunders AO

Chief Commissioner

Tertiary Education and Quality Standards Agency

June 2020

About the Quality Beyond Boundaries Toolkit Steering Group

We commend the work of the project steering group for the oversight of this project and development of the toolkit. The project steering was undertaken by the Quality Beyond Boundaries Group (QBBG), a network of international quality assurance agencies. This network was formed to address the growing quality assurance challenges and opportunities associated with cross border higher education. QBBG members collaborate to share information and best practice, and to work together to improve quality assurance systems for cross border higher education globally.

QBBG Steering Group members comprise:

- Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA), Dubai
- Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), United Kingdom
- Committee for Private Education, Skills Future Singapore
- Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ), Hong Kong
- Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA), Malaysia
- Western Association of Schools and Colleges Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC), United States.

Acknowledgements

Sylvie Cashmere, Tom Hewitt-McManus, Nishala Jayatilaka, Rosemary Marcon, Fran Ryan, Karen Treloar

Author's note

It has been a great privilege to author this Academic Integrity Toolkit in collaboration with Australia's Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency, and to bring to it the experiences I have had over the past 25 years as a student, academic, quality assurance professional, and quality advisor in Australia's higher education sector. The toolkit brings together examples from higher education providers, quality assurance agencies and other groups committed to promoting academic integrity. I extend my sincere thanks to these colleagues from around the world for so generously allowing their knowledge and research to be included in this toolkit.

Tertiary education brings transformational change that provides benefits for the individual student, their family, and for entire communities. Many developed nations saw a dramatic increase in the number of students studying at a tertiary level over the last generation, and demand for tertiary education in the developing world is continuing to increase. Between the years 2000 and 2015 the number of students around the world engaged in tertiary education more than doubled to over 200 million ([UNESCO](#)).

As education systems grow to accommodate increasing demand, more mature systems of quality assurance are required to ensure the opportunity promised by higher education is realised. For the individuals, families, government and non-government organisations that are investing in tertiary education, it is critical that a high-quality education provides students with the knowledge, skills and critical thinking abilities that they need, and that their community will benefit from.

This toolkit applies the principles of quality assurance to creating strong frameworks that support academic integrity. Assuring the integrity of higher education is a crucial requirement for all stakeholders within the sector and quality assurance agencies can provide important leadership in this space. If breaches of academic integrity go unchecked, the consequences are serious, and include threats to public safety, a devaluing of the qualifications issued by a provider or group of providers, and ultimately may result in damage to the reputation of the entire sector.

This Academic Integrity Toolkit aims to support the staff of quality assurance agencies as they work to enhance the systems of quality and control that underpin academic integrity and deliver a thriving and reputable higher education sector that maintains quality as it continues to grow to accommodate demand.

Dr Helen Gniel

Senior Advisor, Quality and Standards
Monash University

Introduction

This Academic Integrity Toolkit has been designed to support quality assurance (QA) agencies implement a cycle of activities to enhance their sector's academic integrity frameworks. A brief introduction to academic integrity is provided below, but there are many excellent resources available that provide a much more detailed and nuanced explanation than is provided here. A list of high quality resources is provided at the end of this toolkit.

Academic integrity

Academic integrity is defined, broadly, as the “moral code of academia” ([Monash University, 2020](#)) and is underpinned by the principles of honesty, trust, respect, integrity, fairness, responsibility and courage ([International Centre for Academic Integrity, 2014](#)). Academic integrity is “fundamental to the success and credibility of higher education globally” ([TEQSA, 2019](#)), and as such higher education (HE) providers have a responsibility to ensure that the principles of academic integrity are communicated to, and upheld by, their entire community of staff and students.

A strong commitment to academic integrity, for an individual student, means the student independently completes all of their work, acknowledging the work of others where appropriate, and communicating their ideas in an honest and responsible manner. By bringing the principles of academic integrity to their studies, students will develop the ability to synthesise new ideas, generate insights that advance knowledge, and truthfully communicate their findings and acknowledging its limitations.

There are many different ways that academic integrity can be breached, each of which undermines a commitment to individual, honest and genuine learning. Collectively, the breaches of academic integrity presented in Table 1 are referred to as academic misconduct.

The proportions in which the different breaches of academic integrity occur are likely to vary depending on the context. Where one country, provider or discipline might find that plagiarism appears to be the most common breach, others might find that engaging friends and relatives to complete assessments on behalf of the student is more common. For this reason, it is important not only to ensure that students and staff are educated about all types of breaches, but also to ensure that students are provided with information and examples that make sense to them and speak to their context.

Table 1: Six categories of academic integrity breaches

Plagiarism	Reproducing the work of someone else without attribution. When a student submits their own work on multiple occasions this is known as self-plagiarism .
Collusion	Working with one or more other individuals to complete an assignment, in a way that is not authorised.
Copying	Reproducing and submitting the work of another student, with or without their knowledge. If a student fails to take reasonable precautions to prevent their own original work from being copied, this may also be considered an offence.
Impersonation	Falsely presenting oneself, or engaging someone else to present as oneself, in an in-person examination.
Contract cheating	Contracting a third party to complete an assessment task, generally in exchange for money or other manner of payment.
Data fabrication and falsification	Manipulating or inventing data with the intent of supporting false conclusions, including manipulating images.

The principles of quality assurance that support robust frameworks to protect academic integrity can also be applied to research and communication of the findings, commonly referred to as research integrity. While the focus of this toolkit is on academic integrity, many of the principles and exercises contained within could be applied to enhancing the quality assurance of research integrity.

Even with the best efforts of all stakeholders, research from around the world demonstrates that it is inevitable that breaches of academic integrity will occur (Table 2).

Table 2: Student surveys of self-reported cheating (reproduced from TEQSA's *Good Practice Note: Addressing Contract Cheating to Safeguard Academic Integrity*, 2017)

Year	Authors	Location	Number of respondents
2005	Brimble and Stevenson-Clarke	Australia	1084
2005	Marsden, Carroll, and Neill	Australia	954
2006	De Lambert, Ellen, and Taylor	New Zealand	1126
2007	Lin and Wen	Taiwan	2068
2008	Kidwell and Kent	Australia	459
2010	Teixeira and Rocha	Portugal	2675
2010	Stephens, Romakin, and Yukhymenko	Ukraine	378

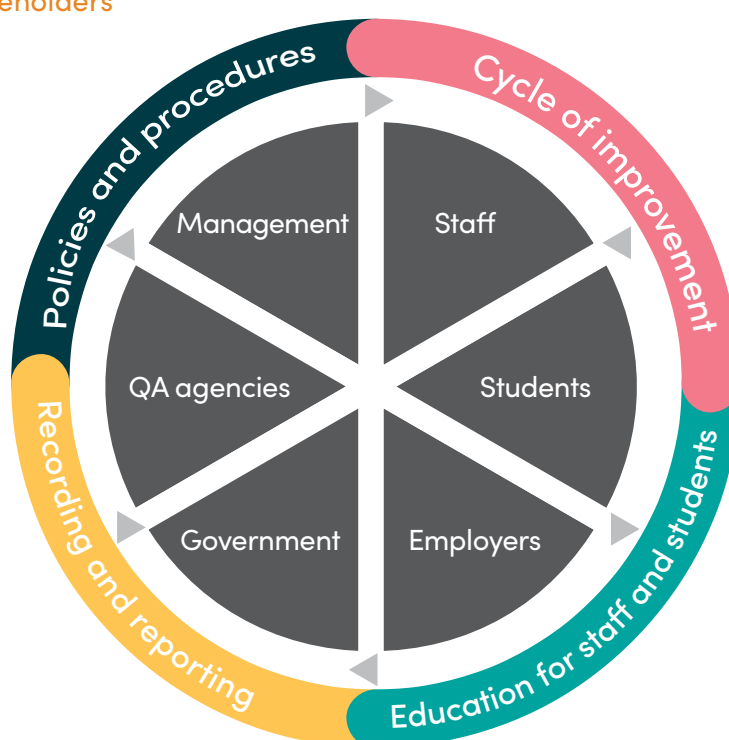
When academic misconduct is identified appropriate action must be taken, however, it is crucial that any intervention is fair, proportionate, and in initial cases focusses on being educative rather than punitive. Some academic integrity breaches may be inadvertent, and result from poor academic practice rather than an attempt to circumvent the rules. In these situations, identifying the breach and beginning with an educative response allows the student to learn from the experience and avoid taking this poor practice with them into their career. By ensuring students receive a solid education in the principles of academic integrity while they are studying, educational institutions also increase the likelihood of these individuals practicing their chosen professions with integrity.

Academic integrity frameworks

The increasing demand and cost of higher education in many counties, combined with a competitive employment market, are providing an increasingly ‘high stakes’ environment for students. These factors, combined with technological advances that have enabled commercialisation of cheating services, have created a high-risk environment for academic integrity. As such, it is not surprising that there is no ‘silver bullet’ that can alone mitigate the risks to academic integrity that the global higher education sector is facing.

Instead, effectively combatting threats to academic integrity requires the implementation of a framework that brings together a number of strategies and enables them to work in unison in a way that reaches – and benefits from – all stakeholders. Given the crucial role that academic integrity plays in public confidence in the higher education sector and the future employees who graduate, it is incumbent on all higher education systems to make their academic integrity frameworks as robust as possible.

Figure 1: An effective academic integrity framework uses a range of strategies and targets all stakeholders



For example, the implementation of fair and consistent penalties for academic misconduct relies not only on sufficiently detailed policies and procedures, but also on appropriate governance of the incidents. Such governance activities include: robust recording of breaches and the penalties applied, reporting to management committees on trends, and a commitment to a process of continuous improvement that proposes enhancements based on identified issues or emerging trends. Similarly, educating students about what constitutes academic misconduct is an essential, but incomplete, intervention. Students also need to receive guidance on developing good academic practice, and be supported to ask questions where they are unsure of their own understanding. HE providers must ensure that staff are educated about the institution's policies and procedures, and that reporting is in place to identify where policy and procedure are not being followed. The educational strategies that are put in place benefit greatly from welcoming student and staff input into the design, and subsequently seeking feedback from these stakeholder groups on the effectiveness, of the product.

The two examples above adhere to the principles of a quality assurance cycle, which works on a simple repeating model of "Do, Assess, Review, Improve". In this toolkit a four-step model of quality assurance is used: "Analyse, Educate, Intervene, and Assess". Undoubtedly other steps could be added, and practitioners are encouraged to modify this model to suit their local context while adhering to the underlying principle that an effective cycle of quality assurance requires that measures that are put in place are assessed for their effectiveness, and adjusted where necessary, before the cycle begins again.

Contract cheating

Contract cheating has gained prominence over the last 15 years since being defined by [Clarke and Lancaster in 2006](#). In Australia, contract cheating gained national prominence after the 2014 *MyMaster* scandal, where several of the country's universities were confronted with evidence of cheating by students contracting out their assignments to commercial essay mills.

This breach of academic integrity creates unique challenges to HE providers as the traditional digital methods that have been used to identify plagiarism, self-plagiarism and collusion with a reasonable degree of confidence are ineffective in identifying when an assessment is written by someone other than the student.

Despite the different challenges posed by the emergence of contract cheating, the principles of quality assurance cycle can be similarly applied to produce a framework that addresses this risk. The role that a QA agency can have in this process is well illustrated by TEQSA's response to the *MyMaster* scandal. Following media reports, TEQSA wrote to all HE providers to ask them to report on what actions they were taking in response to the media reports. After reviewing the submissions received from each university, TEQSA embedded requirements for processes that protect academic and research integrity to be scrutinised for all provider registrations, and identified areas of good practice for dissemination to the entire HE community through its [Good Practice Note: Addressing Contract Cheating to Safeguard Academic Integrity](#). Through conferences, forums and a national series of workshops TEQSA has continued to take a leading role in implementing a whole-of-system response to this most recent threat to the integrity of Australia's higher education system.

How to use this toolkit

This toolkit is designed to help new or developing QA agencies promote academic integrity in their regions by providing practical examples that demonstrate how QA agencies can:

- promote acceptance of the threat posed by academic misconduct
- engage with both staff and students of HE providers to develop relevant and interesting resources that educate stakeholders about academic integrity
- collaborate with HE providers to ensure students and staff are given clear explanations of the different breaches of academic integrity
- work with HE providers to ensure there are appropriate policies and procedures in place, including clear explanation of penalties that will be imposed for different breaches
- form relationships and networks with other QA agencies
- take an integrated approach to combating the threats to academic integrity.

The information in this toolkit is divided into four sections, called **DIMENSIONS**. These four dimensions outline broad quality assurance activities that QA agencies can focus on to promote and protect academic integrity.

Figure 2: Four dimensions of quality assurance activities

Each dimension has been assigned an icon to help you navigate through the document. You can begin at any dimension, and should review all four dimensions in an ongoing manner.



It is not necessary to read the document from start to finish. The four dimensions can be started or actioned in any order, and should be regularly revisited.


Each dimension consists of **three pillars** where examples will help you identify and implement practical actions to combat academic dishonesty.

Figure 3: Pillars and dimensions model of quality assurance



Improving quality assurance by implementing changes in each of the four dimensions is supported by activities associated with three pillars.

The strategies and practical examples included in this toolkit can be used by many other stakeholders in the education system, including other government agencies and the staff of HE providers, to enhance the systems of information and control that underpin academic integrity.

To help QA agencies identify the key strategies that are specific to their role in the system, each dimension contains a boxed section that provides a summary of actions or considerations with a **QA Agency Lens**, indicated with a lens icon .

Glossary

Academic integrity

Demonstration of ethical and honest behaviour during academic endeavours and assessments.

Academic misconduct

An umbrella term that takes in all of the behaviours that breach of academic integrity, such as plagiarism, collusion, copying and cheating.

Assessment

A means of determining a student's understanding and knowledge of learning outcomes. Assessment tasks are commonly written, oral or practical.

Award

The term used for the degree, diploma or other course that is being completed.

Contract cheating

The practice of contracting a third-party to complete an assessment task on behalf of the student, generally in exchange for money or other manner of payment.

Dimension

The term used in this toolkit for the four aspects of quality assurance that are applied to assuring academic integrity.

Ghost writer

Person that completes a written assignment for a student, often for money, often anonymously.

HE (higher education) provider

An umbrella term intended to cover all of the different types of educational institutions offering tertiary education, such as universities, colleges, and technical schools.

Intervention

In this toolkit refers to a measure or action that can be instigated to mitigate the risks posed by academic misconduct.

Non-academic staff

Refers to all of the staff at a HE provider that are engaged in a non teaching capacity. This includes, for example, librarians, student services staff, counsellors, and building maintenance personnel.

Quality assurance agency

A body, often government sanctioned, that is responsible for oversight – or assurance – of the quality of the higher education system. In some jurisdictions these agencies may have regulatory powers, including the ability to impose penalties on providers.

Self-review

A reflective process, ideally informed by data, where a HE provider takes a critical look at their own performance and proposes strategies for improvement.

Stakeholder

In this toolkit refers to a person or institution with an interest in higher education. This includes students, academics, employers, and managerial staff of HE providers.

Acronyms

AI	Academic integrity
CHEA	Council for Higher Education Accreditation
HE provider	Higher education provider
INQAAHE	International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education
MQA	Malaysian Qualifications Agency
NZQA	New Zealand Qualifications Authority
TEQSA	Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education
QA agency	Quality assurance agency



Addressing academic misconduct requires an understanding of where, and how, the offences are occurring. When you can clearly define the threat, you can work in partnership with HE providers, government officials and the students themselves.

This dimension will show you three pillars to help you **analyse** the threat in your sector:

DEFINE, QUANTIFY, UNDERSTAND



Pillar 1: Define

Use definitions that are already available, and your knowledge of your local context, to produce definitions and explanations of different academic integrity breaches for HE providers.

Example 1: Glossary for academic integrity

Use definitions like those created by the [European Network for Academic Integrity](#) as the basis for creating definitions that speak to your local context.

Define the current state of your sector.

- What information is currently being provided by your QA agency, government agencies, and providers?
- Has there been any media reports of wide-scale academic integrity breaches?
- Can you direct and advance the conversations about academic integrity?

Example 2: TEQSA's Guidance Note on Academic Integrity

The [guide](#) provides Australia's higher education sector with a clear explanation of the importance of academic integrity and the role that institutional frameworks play in mitigating the risk.



QA AGENCY LENS

- Provide context-specific definitions of academic integrity breaches.
- Carry out or support research into academic integrity in your region.
- Understand why students are turning to cheating behaviours.
- Work together with HE providers to support academic integrity.
- Promote conversations about academic integrity.



More research is needed from across the world to form a better picture of cheating behaviours in different countries, cultures, and fields of study. New research benefits the global education community by helping to identify common issues.

Consider taking a survey of HE providers or supporting and promoting research into breaches of academic integrity in your area. Supporting and promoting research will help raise awareness and provide new perspectives on the problem, to the benefit of all stakeholders.

Example 3: Confessions of Academic Ghost Writers: The Iranian Experience

([Shahghasemi and Akhavan, 2015](#))

In this study, the authors studied the “plagiarism industry” in Iran. The authors took a different perspective by interviewing students that were earning money as ghost writers, providing new and interesting insights into the motivations of individuals providing a cheating service.

As new threats to academic integrity emerge, it is important to keep up to date with developments, and to support research that seeks to understand these threats.

Example 4: How common is contract cheating in higher education and is it increasing?

([Newton, 2018](#))

Contract cheating, where students contract a third party to complete their work, was defined relatively recently ([Clarke & Lancaster, 2006](#)). In this meta-analysis, Newton brings together the previous decade of research from around the world.

There are many reasons why cheating behaviours might be under-reported. For example:

- The different types of academic integrity breaches are not well defined.
- Academic staff lack the necessary knowledge, skills and tools to accurately identify academic misconduct.
- Academic staff are not sure how to proceed if they identify cheating.
- A lack of reporting mechanisms to record instances within the HE provider.
- A lack of a single QA agency to identify trends across multiple HE providers.
- Unwillingness by academic staff, HE provider managers or government officials to accept that cheating is occurring.



Example 5: Cheating may be under-reported across Canada's universities and colleges

([Eaton, 2020](#))

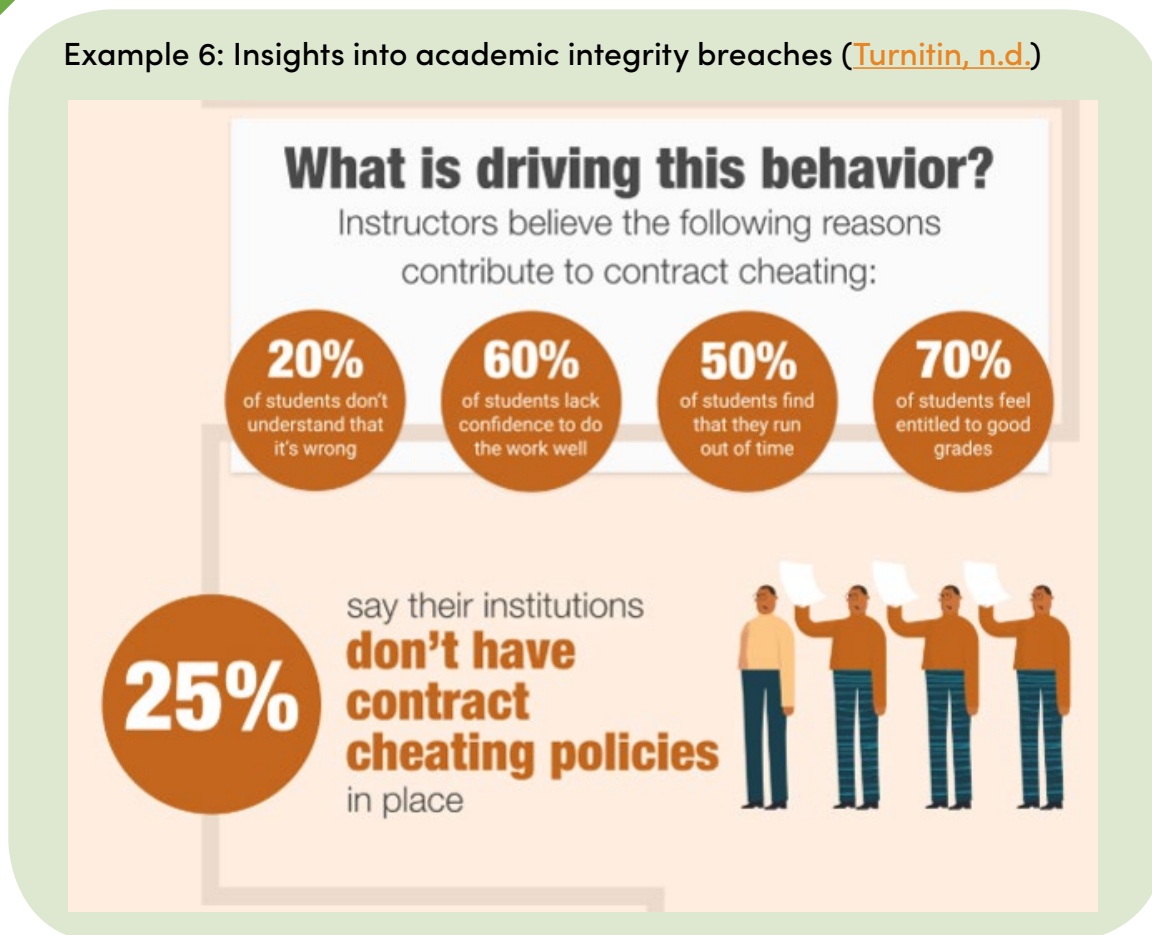
In this study, the author identifies recent high-profile cases of academic and research misconduct and contrasts this with the relative lack of research into the scale of misconduct at Canada's educational institutions.

Understanding which of these factors are affecting accurate reporting in your region can help inform more accurate research.



To connect with students to address cheating behaviours you need to understand the motivations and enablers of the behaviour. Good data can help your QA agency identify the most effective strategies to connect with HE providers and students.

Example 6: Insights into academic integrity breaches ([Turnitin, n.d.](#))

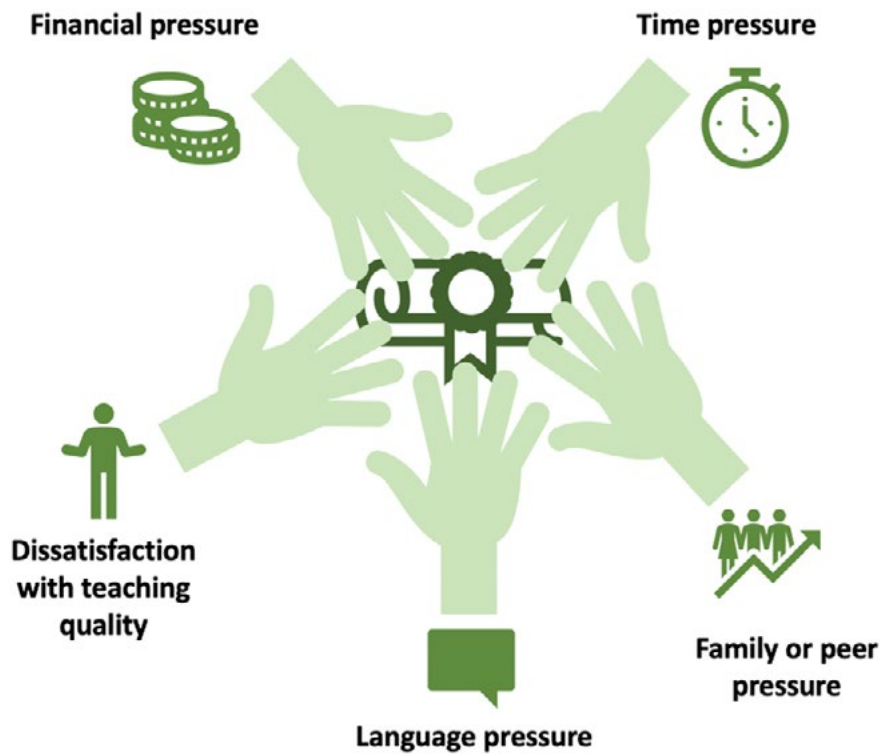


It is also important to understand why teaching staff may not be identifying breaches. Staff are likely to have different levels of experience and professional development, and if they have not been through an induction process for their current HE provider may be unsure of the policies at their current HE provider.

Consider the following:

- Do academic staff know what to look for?
- Do staff believe they will be supported by the college?
- Do academic staff know what to do if they suspect a student of cheating?
- Do academic staff understand the penalties they can apply?

Students engage in cheating for different reasons, and these are likely to vary in different populations of students. While a small population of students cheat simply to avoid doing the work, research from around the world has identified several drivers that make students vulnerable to breaching academic integrity standards (e.g. Brimble, 2016).



Students that fall into one or more of these vulnerable categories are at a higher risk of engaging in academic misconduct. While the responsibility for academic integrity is shared with students, a notable feature of the categories above is that high quality education and student support can play a role in decreasing the motivation for students to turn to academic misconduct as a way of coping with external pressures.

Vulnerable students may also be targeted by individuals or companies offering cheating services. Gaining an understanding of the types of students that are targeted, and the methods that commercial companies use to target these students, can help your QA agency provide valuable insight and advice to HE providers in countering these attempts.



To successfully promote academic integrity all stakeholders need education about the importance of academic integrity, types of threats, and the best way of identifying and managing breaches when they occur.

The quality of education about academic integrity can be enhanced by the provision of clear and consistent information from the local QA agency.

This dimension will show you three pillars to help you **educate** the HE providers and students in your sector:

RESOURCES, COLLABORATE, ENGAGE



Pillar 1: Resources

Use definitions that are already available, and your knowledge of the local context, to produce definitions and explanations of different academic integrity breaches for HE providers.

Example 7: Clear examples for students

The University of Melbourne in Australia [presents students with three elements for each type of academic misconduct](#):

- A definition
- Clear examples
- An explanation of how each example breached integrity requirements (see next page).



QA AGENCY LENS

- Explain why academic integrity matters.
- Develop guidance for the sector.
- Promote collaboration and a community of practice.
- Join a community for QA agencies and regulators.
- Educate all stakeholders.

Encourage HE providers to present students with clear information about academic integrity and different breaches. This information should be easy for students to understand, and should explain the penalties involved.



Example 7 continued: The University of Melbourne

Verbatim Copying

What is it?

When parts of another person's work are copied directly and presented as your own work. Any use of the exact words of another person or organisation should be placed in quotation marks (" ") and cited appropriately, in accordance with the conventions used in your field of study or discipline.

Scholarship example

Original referenced text

The shifting fortunes of war had a terrible impact, and not just on those who were killed or maimed in the fighting. When the republican General Custine's forces took the city of Mainz in the Rhineland in October 1792, local patriots created a Society of Friends of Liberty and Equality with five hundred members, adapted their own version of the 'Marseillaise', the 'Bürgerlied der Mainzer', and planted a liberty tree (McPhee, 2016, p. 182).

Text used with permission. MCPhee, P. (2016). Liberty or death: The French revolution. London: Yale University Press.

✓ Good scholarship

After the capture of the city of Mainz by General Custine, "local patriots created a Society of Friends of Liberty and Equality with five hundred members" (McPhee, 2016).

✗ Plagiarism and poor scholarship

After the capture of the city of Mainz by General Custine, local patriots created a Society of Friends of Liberty and Equality with five hundred members.

ⓘ Explanation

- The exact words of the original author have been used here without any acknowledgment. This is plagiarism.
- When using a direct quote, you must ensure you use quotation marks to indicate the direct quote and cite the original source.



Quality assurance is most effective when it is seen as collaborative, rather than adversarial. Effective collaboration begins with recognition that activities that undermine the integrity of higher education awards present a threat to the entire industry, and therefore everyone in the industry has a role to play in promoting and enhancing academic integrity.

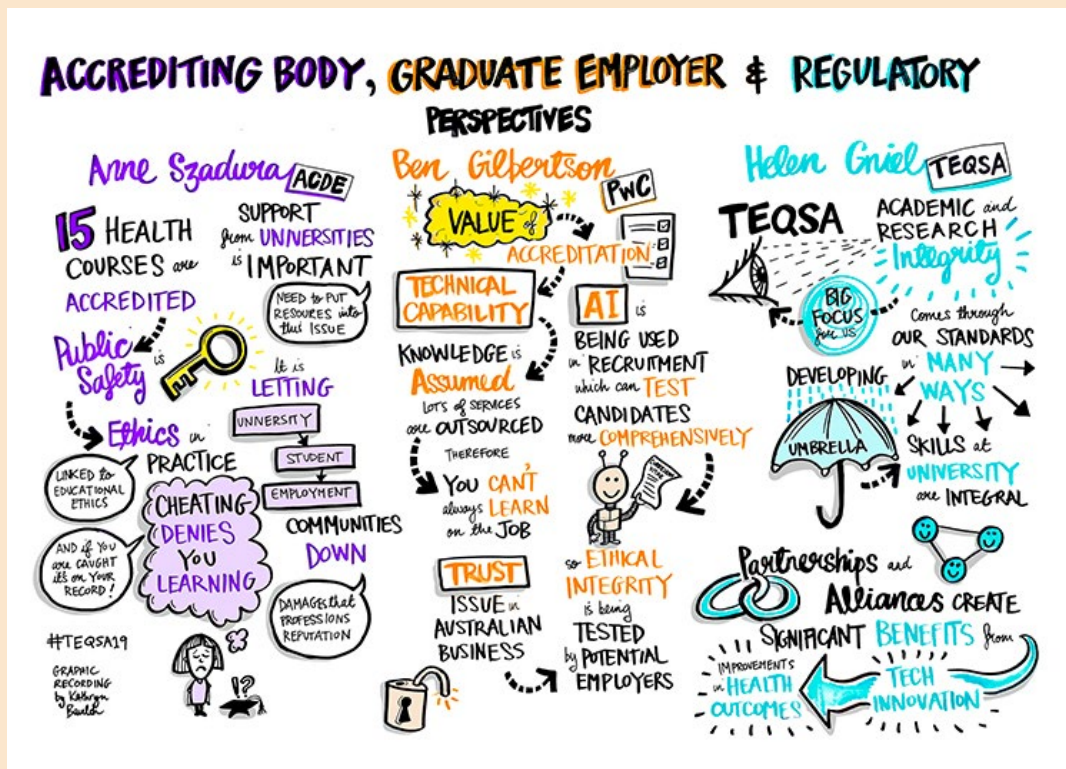
Example 8: International Centre for Academic Integrity

The [International Centre for Academic Integrity](#) was founded in 1992 and provides a worldwide network of administrators and educators that are committed to upholding academic integrity.

Encourage collaboration between all segments of the higher education sector by acknowledging that breaches of academic integrity will be occurring in all HE providers and across all disciplines. Including the perspectives of employers can provide students with additional insights into the potential consequences of their behaviour that they might not have considered.

Example 9: Bring student leaders together

Bring student leaders together with employers, professional bodies and quality assurance professionals to enhance understanding ([TEQSA Academic Integrity Forum - Students, 2019](#))





Pillar 3: Engage



QA agencies provide a single focal point for the HE providers in the system, and can encourage a community of practice through conferences, forums or other professional development activities.

Example 10: National program of workshops to protect academic integrity (TEQSA).

In 2019, Australia's QA agency held a [series of workshops](#) around the country, allowing smaller HE providers with less resources to send staff and ensuring this important message was spread broadly through the sector.

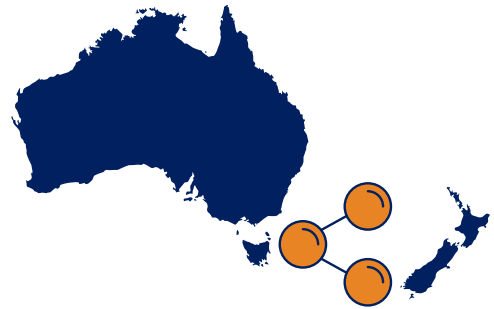


QA AGENCY LENS

Engage with other QA agencies in your region and around the world to share knowledge about emerging trends, best practice education, analysis, detection and interventions

Example 11: Share knowledge with other QA agencies

In 2020, the [quality assurance agencies for the higher education sectors in Australia and New Zealand will collaborate](#) to promote academic integrity and support the HE providers of both countries with strategies to help combat contract cheating.



Engage with HE providers to identify staff development resources and practices that could be used as good practice examples for smaller or less developed HE providers to action.

Example 12: Academic Integrity Ambassadors

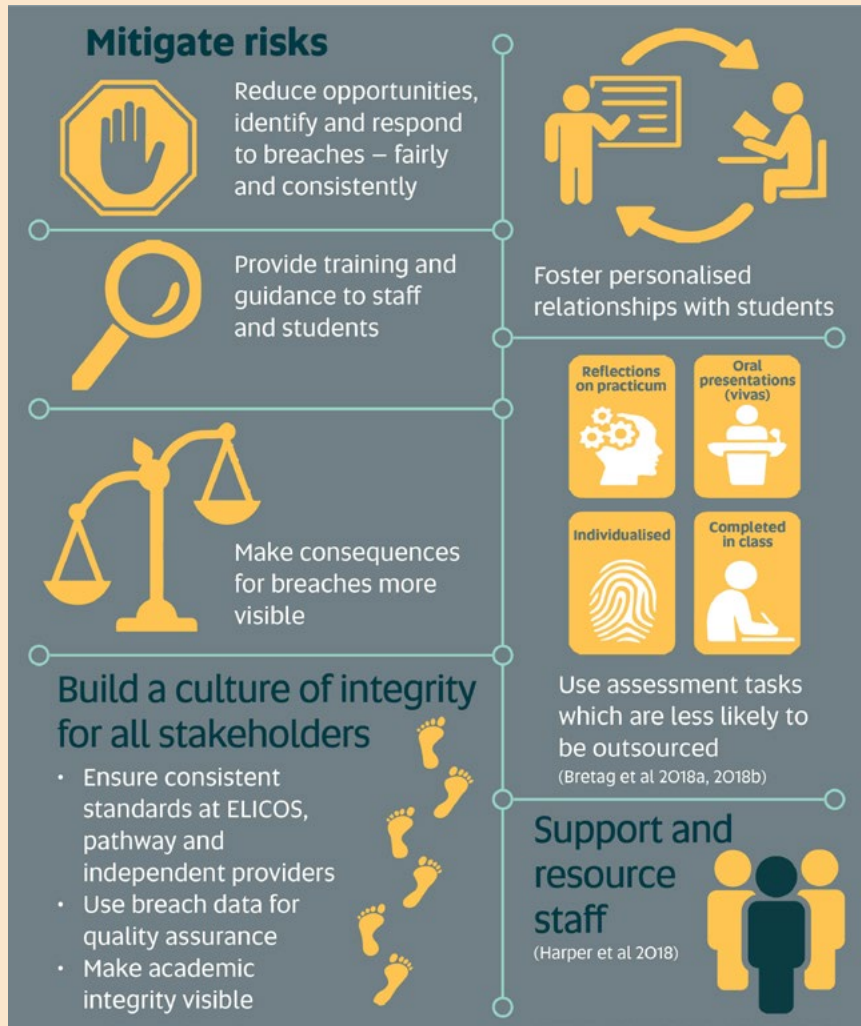
A network of well-trained staff spread throughout the academic units of the HE providers, such as these [Academic Integrity Ambassadors](#), provides support to colleagues.





Example 13: Visual guides for staff

These provide a quick [reminder and reference point](#) (Bretag et al, 2019)



Example 14: Professional development modules for staff

Provide training and support for staff as they review the learning assessment tasks in their courses with academic integrity front of mind. (Example: [Monash Education Academy Module: Supporting academic integrity in your teaching](#)).



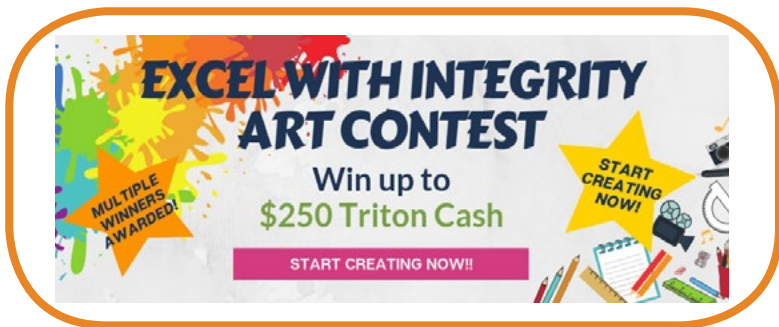
Pillar 3: Engage



Encourage HE providers to engage directly with students in high profile, visible campaigns that promote the value of academic integrity.

Example 15: Highly visible campaigns on campus

These can be an effective way to reach a large group of students. This week-long [campaign from Deakin University](#) in Australia included competitions and materials translated into several different languages.



University of California San Diego

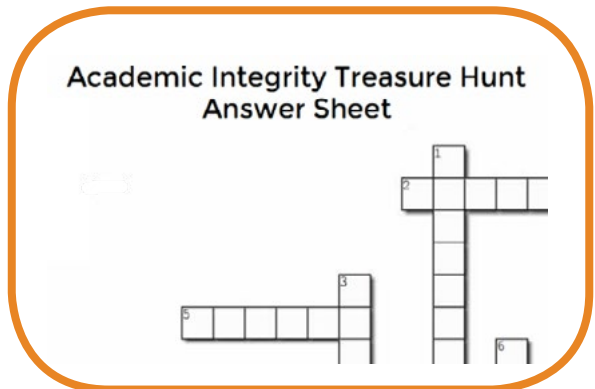


[Monash University](#)



QA AGENCY LENS

Integrity Competitions are a great way to get students involved in promoting academic integrity to their fellow students.



[University of Wollongong](#)



Effective regulation requires periodic assessment because the type of integrity breaches, and the ways of combating them, change.

Assessing the sector as a whole, and assessing individual HE providers, are both important aspects of effective quality assurance.

This dimension will show you three pillars to help you **assess**:

THE SECTOR, A PROVIDER, AN INTERVENTION



Pillar 1: Assess the sector

Gathering information to assess the sector can take many forms, such as a request for information, a request for HE providers to undertake self-review, or an audit by a central QA agency.

An initial sector scan might include:

- Developing an overview of the types and numbers of HE providers.
- Developing an overview of student numbers and nationalities.
- Identifying if government agencies with a responsibility for education are aware of the threat posed by academic dishonesty.
- Engaging with other tiers of the education sector, such as secondary schools, to share knowledge and practice.
- Reviewing approaches taken in other jurisdictions to see if these actions could help promote academic integrity in your area.
- Identifying networks and integrity champions.

Example 16: The PAICKT Project

This [project](#) has used surveys in multiple languages and student focus groups to develop and understanding of academic integrity practices in Caucasus, Kazakhstan and Turkey.



QA AGENCY LENS

- Does the sector acknowledge that academic misconduct occurs?
- Is the sector addressing threats of academic integrity?
- Are HE providers tackling the threat in their institution?
- Are your interventions as a QA agency effective?



Example 17: New Zealand legislation to outlaw contract cheating

In 2011, the government of New Zealand became the first to outlaw the practice of contract cheating. The resulting media attention provided a further platform for the New Zealand QA agencies to inform the public about the importance of academic integrity.

[Section 292E of the Education Act 1989](#) (New Zealand)

292E Offence to provide or advertise cheating services

- (1) A person commits an offence if the person provides any service specified in subsection (4) with the intention of giving a student an unfair advantage over other students.
- (2) A person commits an offence if the person advertises any service described in subsection (4) knowing that the service has or would have the effect of giving a student an unfair advantage over other students.
- (3) A person commits an offence who, without reasonable excuse, publishes an advertisement for any service described in subsection (4).
- (4) The services referred to in subsections (1) to (3) are as follows:
 - (a) completing an assignment or any other work that a student is required to complete as part of a programme or training scheme;
 - (b) providing or arranging the provision of an assignment that a student is required to complete as part of a programme or training scheme;
 - (c) providing or arranging the provision of answers for an examination that a student is required to sit as part of a programme or training scheme;
 - (d) sitting an examination that a student is required to sit as part of a programme or training scheme or providing another person to sit the exam in place of the student.
- (5) A person who commits an offence against this section is liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding \$10,000.
- (6) In this section,—

programme has the meaning given to it in [section 159\(1\)](#)

student means a student of a programme or training scheme

training scheme has the meaning given to it in [section 159\(1\)](#).

Section 292E: inserted, on 30 August 2011, by [section 42](#) of the Education Amendment Act 2011 (2011 No 66).

Section 292E(5): amended, on 4 October 2013, by [regulation 3\(1\)](#) of the Criminal Procedure (Consequential Amendments) Regulations 2013 (SR 2013/409).

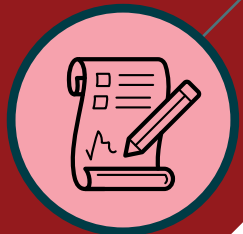


Legislative solutions have also been recently put in place in Australia and Ireland.



QA AGENCY LENS

A sector assessment will allow you to identify existing communities of practice that your QA agency could interact with to promote academic integrity.



Example 18: Alberta Council on Academic Integrity

The [Alberta Council on Academic Integrity](#) is a “group of like-minded individuals committed to supporting academic integrity in Alberta”. Identifying groups such as these, whether formal or informal, can help you identify ‘champions’ who will serve as advisors, sources of information and spreaders of information.

A sector assessment provides valuable information from the HE providers that will allow you to identify and respond to emerging issues. Welcoming feedback from the HE providers on a regular basis builds trust in your agency and provides a clear avenue for information exchange.

Example 19: TEQSA’s annual stakeholder survey

This [survey](#) provides a forum for every registered HE provider to contribute to TEQSA’s knowledge about emerging trends in the sector, as well as providing feedback about the agency’s conduct and core business. By modelling transparency in this way, TEQSA helps to shape a culture of accountability and honesty in the education sector.



QA AGENCY LENS

Be open to receiving feedback from the sector about advice you have provided.

Example 20: QAA 2019 survey to evaluate the effectiveness of 2017 advice

Seeking feedback about a specific initiative is an effective way to use the knowledge of the education community to provide advice that is current, clear and effective.

The [QAA survey](#) asked HE providers to identify if the advice was:

- helpful
- implemented
- effective
- up to date.



**CONTRACT CHEATING
GUIDANCE SURVEY
QUESTIONS**

27 September 2019



There can be many different approaches taken by HE providers to address threats to academic integrity. However, there are some common themes that should be in place. Assessment of HE providers can be undertaken initially with a desktop scan and a small, targeted information request for each HE provider.

Policies and procedures are an important mechanism for signalling that the institution's commitment to academic integrity and ensures both staff and students have clear instructions about what constitutes a breach, and what action to take subsequently. Policy documents should be easy for students and staff to locate, and written in plain language. Both staff and students should be told about the policies when they join the HE provider, and regularly throughout their time working or studying there.



QA AGENCY LENS

When assessing a HE provider's policies or procedures, look for:

- Clear definitions of academic integrity and the various types of breaches.
- Clear explanation of responsibilities for a staff member that identifies a suspected breach.
- An explanation of the penalties that can be imposed.
- Details of how a student can appeal a finding of misconduct.
- An explanation of how incidents are recorded on the student's record, and how long records are retained.
- An explanation of how incidents will be reported within the HE provider.
- How regularly the policies are reviewed.



Staff and student education play a crucial role in prevention breaches of academic integrity. This is particularly the case for breaches that occur because a student has not previously been educated about academic integrity. Providing an introductory short course that all students must complete on admission recognises that students come from diverse backgrounds and prior educational experiences.

Example 21: Short modules about academic integrity

[Modules, such as those developed by Monash University](#), provide all students with a base level of knowledge. The modules are publicly available and can also act as a resource for parents and other people supporting the student.

Academic staff also have a diverse range of backgrounds, teaching experience, professional development and prior experiences. HE providers should be reminded not to overlook the role of non-academic staff and the important partnership that these staff play in prevention, detection and support.



QA AGENCY LENS

When assessing a HE provider's educational resources, consider:

- Are both staff and students receiving training at the point of induction?
- Does this training provide a solid basis for understanding the HE provider's academic integrity framework?
- Is the HE provider including information and training for non-academic staff?

Placements or other arrangements where a third party is delivering part of a qualification presents different challenges in maintaining academic integrity and other quality assurance matters.

Example 22: TEQSA's series of Guidance Notes

The [Guidance Notes](#) include a note dedicated to quality assurance matters with third party arrangements.



Site visits provide valuable insight into how staff and students of a HE provider promote the importance of academic integrity, and how students are educated as a preventative measure. Walking around the campus can provide you with examples of interesting initiatives and practical demonstration of how the HE provider promotes academic integrity.



QA AGENCY LENS

When visiting a HE provider campus:

- Meet with staff and check their understanding of academic integrity, including their knowledge of the HE provider's policies and penalties.
- Meet with students and ask them if they have received information about academic integrity and education to help them develop good academic practice.
- Seek evidence that education and support are offered to students as a preventative measure.
- Ask to see records identifying breaches and penalties that have been imposed.
- Keep an eye out for advertisements of cheating services that have not been removed.



Undertake regular self-assessments to identify if the actions you have taken so far as a QA agency are having a positive impact. Be prepared to change course if required.

Regularly review the information you are providing to ensure it remains current, and is based on the most up-to-date knowledge from around the world.



QA AGENCY LENS

When assessing the effectiveness of your agency, consider:

- Did you take any baseline measurements that would help you to identify if your intervention was effective?
- Did your intervention reach all HE providers?
- Did you identify any unforeseen issues in implementing the intervention?
- Did you seek feedback from the HE providers about the intervention?
- Does the intervention still reflect the most current knowledge in the industry?
- Can you identify improvements to the intervention?
- Can you identify a better way to implement the next intervention?



It must be acknowledged that there will always be a need for HE providers to intervene and take action when breaches of academic integrity are identified.

Similarly, it is necessary for QA agencies to intervene when HE providers fail to implement strategies to combat cheating.

This dimension will show you three pillars to help you **intervene**:

AT THE SECTOR LEVEL, AT A PROVIDER LEVEL, AND WITH STUDENTS



Pillar 1: Intervene at the sector level

As a central focal point, QA agencies are best placed to receive and record information from the sector about emerging trends.

Create a system to **identify and collate information** from a broad range of sources, such as:

- other QA agencies
- integrity networks
- conferences
- journal articles
- digital and print media
- other sectors of the education system.



QA AGENCY LENS

- Be prepared to act when you see gaps in the sector.
- Work collaboratively across the sector.
- Be the focal point and repository for information.
- Show leadership.

Concisely present key emerging information to the sector, and support stakeholders in their efforts to identify and take action against suspected breaches.





Example 23: MQA Statement on Academic Integrity

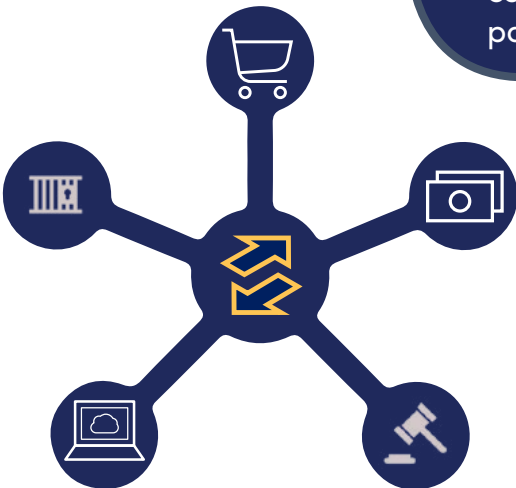
In 2018, the Malaysian Qualification Agency (MQA) released a [public statement](#) urging all HE providers to instigate measures to ensure academic integrity, and linked this requirement to the accreditation process that HE providers must submit to.

Working with government agencies is another way to intervene in a way that benefits the entire education sector. This can include legislation outlawing essay mills, as presented in Example 17. Another way is to support initiatives that put pressure on private companies to stop providing the market place for essay mills (Example 24).



QA AGENCY LENS

Sector interventions may include working with government to pass laws and targeting companies that facilitate advertisements or payments of cheating services.



Example 24: Quality Assurance Agency pressures technology companies

In 2019, the UK's [QAA wrote to PayPal, Facebook and Youtube](#) to pressure these companies to support academic integrity by refusing to host advertisements and to stop facilitating payments to essay mills and other cheating services.



From time to time, it may be necessary to intervene with a HE provider that is failing to meet the standards required to protect academic integrity. Interventions that target the specific deficiency will be most effective.



STEP 1 - Set clear expectations

What should the HE provider be doing?



STEP 2 - Provide evidence examples

What can the HE provider show you?



STEP 3 - Propose remedial action

What does the HE provider need to do to fix it?

The nature of these interventions will be dependent on:

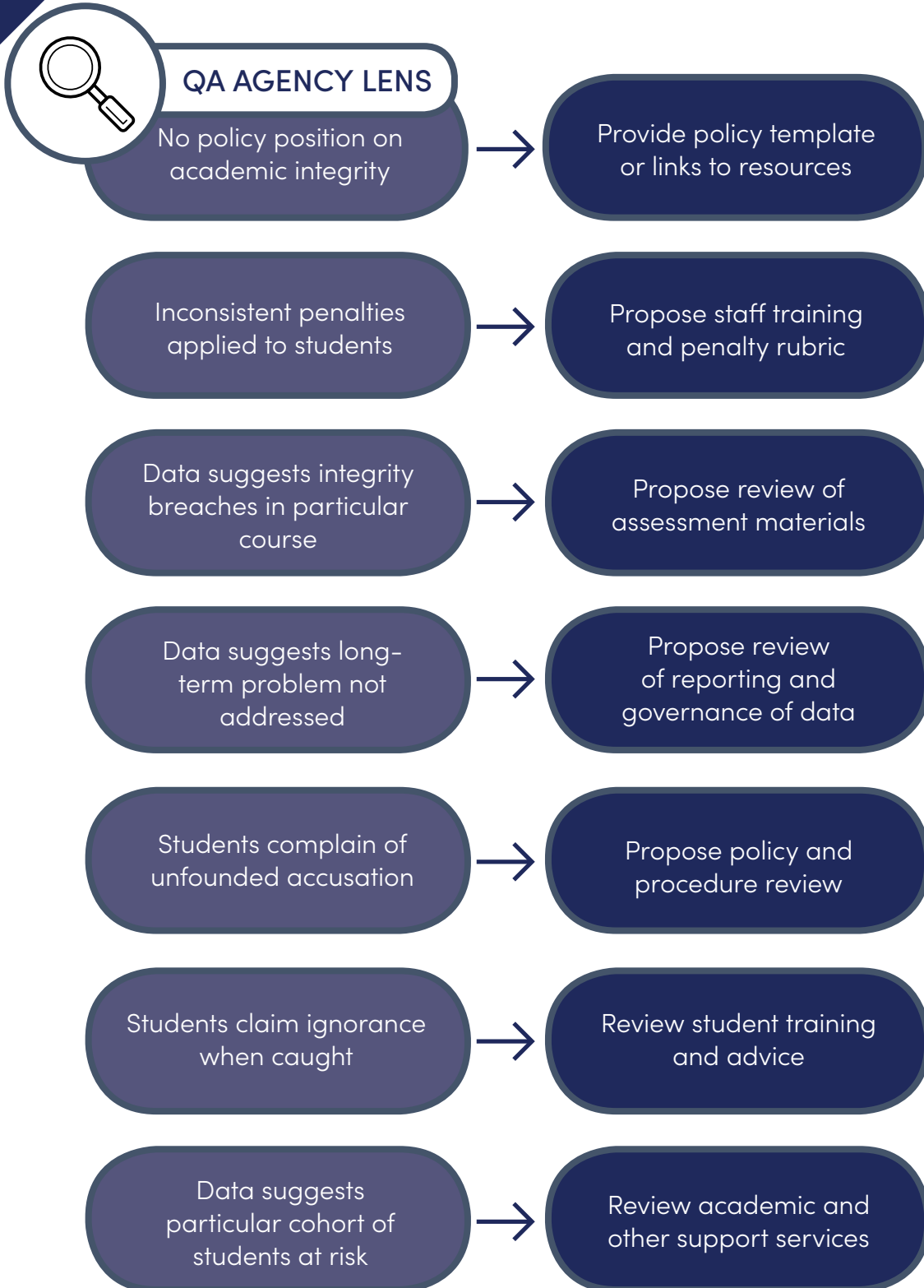
- the seriousness of the problem
- the immediacy of the threat posed
- the powers available to the QA agency.

Example 25: National Register of Higher Education Providers

Australia's [National Register of Higher Education Providers](#) is maintained by TEQSA, and lists the registration details of all HE providers and courses that have received accreditation by TEQSA. Regulatory action or conditions imposed on a HE provider or a course of study must be publicly published on this website.



If your agency does not have authority to compel HE providers to undertake certain actions, other methods of intervention can still be effective.





Ultimately, it is the job of providers to intervene with students that are believed to have engaged in cheating behaviour

As a QA agency, your role is to:

- set clear expectations around the standards expected for academic integrity and honesty
- provide leadership to the sector by providing clear definitions, resources and guidance
- support HE providers to provide training to staff and students
- ensure HE providers have clear policies that advise students and staff of the frameworks that uphold academic integrity
- ensure HE providers have a fair and consistent penalty system for students that are found to have breached academic integrity
- require reporting of instances and penalties to key governance committees to ensure that there is accountability
- work with other QA agencies and networks to ensure interventions are current and relevant
- work with government to consider legislative measures to support academic integrity.

Summary of the QA Agency Lens

Actions that QA agencies can take to address each of the four pillars in this toolkit were included in each section. The consolidated list is presented below.



ANALYSE

- Provide context-specific definitions of academic integrity breaches.
- Carry out or support research into academic integrity in your region.
- Understand why students are turning to cheating behaviours.
- Work together with HE providers to support academic integrity.
- Promote conversations about academic integrity.



EDUCATE

- Explain why academic integrity matters.
- Develop guidance for the sector.
- Promote collaboration and a community of practice.
- Join a community for QA agencies.
- Educate all stakeholders.



ASSESS

- Does the sector acknowledge that cheating occurs?
- Is the sector addressing threats to academic integrity?
- Are HE providers tackling the threat in their institution?
- Are your interventions as a QA agency effective?



INTERVENE

- Be prepared to act when you see gaps in the sector.
- Work collaboratively across the sector.
- Be the focal point and repository for information.
- Show leadership.

List of boxed examples

ANALYSE

- Example 1 [Glossary for academic integrity](#)
- Example 2 [TEQSA's Guidance Note on Academic Integrity](#)
- Example 3 [Confessions of academic ghost writers: the Iranian experience](#)
- Example 4 [How common is contract cheating in higher education and is it increasing?](#)
- Example 5 [Cheating may be under-reported across Canada's universities and colleges](#)
- Example 6 [Insights into academic integrity breaches](#)

EDUCATE

- Example 7 [Clear examples for students](#)
- Example 8 [The International Centre for Academic Integrity](#)
- Example 9 [Bring student leaders together](#)
- Example 10 [National program of workshops to protect academic integrity](#)
- Example 11 [Share knowledge with other QA agencies](#)
- Example 12 [Academic integrity ambassadors](#)
- Example 13 [Visual guides for staff](#)
- Example 14 [Professional development modules for staff](#)
- Example 15 [Highly visible campaigns on campus](#)

ASSESS

- Example 16 [The PAICKT project](#)
- Example 17 [New Zealand legislation to outlaw contract cheating](#)
- Example 18 [Alberta Council on Academic Integrity](#)
- Example 19 [TEQSA's annual stakeholder survey](#)
- Example 20 [QAA feedback survey to evaluate the effectiveness of 2017 advice](#)
- Example 21 [Short modules about academic integrity](#)
- Example 22 [TEQSA's series of Guidance Notes](#)

INTERVENE

- Example 23 [MQA statement on academic integrity](#)
- Example 24 [QAA pressures technology companies](#)
- Example 25 [Australia's National Register of Higher Education Providers](#)

List of quality assurance agencies and further resources

Quality Assurance Agencies

QA agencies around the world take on many different forms, with a variety of responsibilities. While some QA agencies have a national responsibility for the quality of higher education in both public and private providers, in many other countries QA agencies are organised on a state or province basis. Additionally, in many countries course-based quality assurance is undertaken by professional bodies that accredit the qualifications that provide entry to specific professions, such as medical, teaching or engineering qualifications.

Several international cooperative networks bring together QA agencies and professionals from around the world to promote quality assurance practices. These organisations provide an excellent entry point into a community of practice for emerging QA agencies or for individuals that are new to quality assurance. In addition, the memberships lists of these organisations provide a list of QA agencies from around the world.

- International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE)
www.inqaahe.org
- Quality Beyond Boundaries Group (QBBG)
www.qbbg.ae
- European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)
www.enqa.eu
- CHEA International Quality Group (CIQG)
www.chea.org
- Asia Pacific Quality Network (APQN)
www.apqn.org

Academic integrity organisations

- Asia Pacific Forum on Educational Integrity
www.apfei.edu.au
- European Network on Academic Integrity
www.academicintegrity.eu
- Higher Education Academy
www.heacademy.ac.uk
- International Center for Academic Integrity
www.academicintegrity.org
- Plagiarism.org
www.plagiarism.org

Links to resources on academic integrity

- Bretag, T. (ed.) (2016). *Handbook of Academic Integrity* Springer: Singapore. Available at: <https://www.springer.com/gp/book/9789812870971>
- European Network for Academic Integrity (2018). *General Guidelines for Academic Integrity*. Available at: http://www.academicintegrity.eu/wp/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Guidelines_amended_version_1.1_09_2019.pdf
- New Zealand Qualifications Agency (2013). *Effective Practice in preventing and detecting academic fraud*. Available at: <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/assets/Providers-and-partners/NZQA-Effective-practice-guide.pdf>
- Universities Australia (2017). *Academic Integrity Best Practice Principles*. Available at: <https://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/UA-Academic-Integrity-Best-Practice-Principles.pdf>

Links to resources on contract cheating

- TEQSA (2017). *Good Practice Note: Addressing Contract Cheating to Safeguard Academic Integrity*. Available at: <https://www.teqsa.gov.au/latest-news/publications/good-practice-note-addressing-contract-cheating-safeguard-academic>
- Council for Higher Education Accreditation/International Quality Group (2016). *Advisory Statement on Combatting Corruption in Higher Education*. Available at: <http://www.iiep.unesco.org/en/chea-and-iiep-unesco-issue-advisory-statement-combatting-corruption-higher-education-3623>
- International Center for Academic Integrity (2016). *Institutional toolkit to address contract cheating*. Available at: http://integrity.fiu.edu/pdfs/Contract_Cheating.pdf
- International Day of Action Against Contract Cheating (n.d.). [website] Available at: <http://contractcheating.weebly.com/>
- International Journal for Educational Integrity (2017). [special thematic collection on contract cheating] Available at: <https://edintegrity.springeropen.com/>
- Quality Assurance Agency (2016). *Plagiarism in Higher Education - Custom essay writing services: an exploration and next steps for the UK higher education sector*. Available at: https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/plagiarism-in-higher-education-2016.pdf?sfvrsn=308cfe81_2
- Lancaster, T (n.d.). *Contract Cheating*. [blog] ThomasLancaster.co.uk. Available at: <http://thomaslancaster.co.uk/contract-cheating/>

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2. Bretag, T. et al., TEQSA and Contract Cheating and Assessment Design (2019). Extract of *Academic integrity in Australian higher education – a national priority infographic* [infographic]. Available at: <https://www.teqsa.gov.au/sites/default/files/academic-integrity-infographic.pdf?v=1574919157> [accessed 30 April 2020] (Example 13).
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4. Clarke, R., & Lancaster, T. (2006). Eliminating the Successor to Plagiarism? Identifying the Usage of Contract Cheating Sites. In: *Second International Plagiarism Conference*. Gateshead, United Kingdom. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228367576_Eliminating_the_successor_to_plagiarism_Identifying_the_usage_of_contract_cheating_sites [accessed 30 April 2020].
5. Deakin University, Contract Cheating Awareness Week [advertisement] as cited in TEQSA (2017). *Good Practice Note: Addressing Contract Cheating to Safeguard Academic Integrity*, p.13. Available at: <https://www.teqsa.gov.au/latest-news/publications/good-practice-note-addressing-contract-cheating-safeguard-academic#case3> [accessed 30 April 2020] (Example 15).
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14. Monash University (n.d.). *The Integrity Campaign*. Available at: <https://www.monash.edu/integrity-campaign> [accessed 30 April 2020] (**Example 15**).
15. Newton, D. (2019). U.K. Universities Ask PayPal, Google To Shut Access To Cheating Sites. *Forbes*. Available at: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/dereknewton/2019/03/28/uk-colleges-ask-paypal-google-to-shut-access-to-cheating-sites/#53ff3f4c765f> [accessed 30 April 2020] (**Example 24**).
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