

## Talking with students about academic integrity in an online learning environment

Communicating with our students about academic integrity is a critical element of the teaching, learning and assessment cycle. It is more important than ever as we move much of our assessment online in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We can communicate our important message to students by:

- Using Zoom to speak directly with our students. Record and post on Blackboard.
- Pre-recording a video to deliver your message. Provide a platform (e.g. Blackboard Discussion board) for students to ask and answer questions post-session.
- Using Padlet to provide information and enable students to ask questions.

[Download the slides \(PPTX, 1MB\)](#)

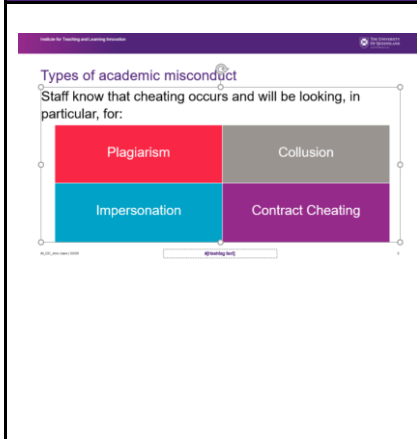
**Discuss academic integrity in the current environment. Take an empathetic approach.**

Academic integrity is:  
**Acting with the values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility in learning, teaching and research.**  
(Universities Australia, 2017)

Academic integrity = Professional integrity = Personal integrity

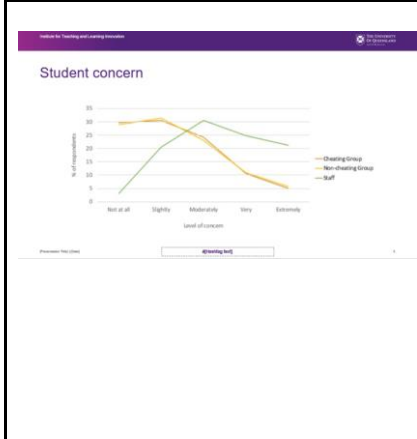
- Start with a message of trust. Communicate that learning is the main goal and we are here to help you do that. Outcomes will be:
  - pride and confidence in your achievements
  - learn new knowledge and how to apply it
  - upholding a core value of the University community
  - faith in the broader community that UQ graduates are knowledgeable and skilled.
- Academic integrity, professional integrity and personal integrity are one and the same.
- Acknowledge current situation and added student pressures.
- Convey your expectations for each assessment task and how students can maintain integrity.
- Let students clarify assessment tasks and marking criteria.
- You could share the [academic integrity pledge](#) and [Learn.UQ integrity notice](#).

**Highlight the most common forms of cheating in online assessment and the reasons why students are tempted to cheat.**



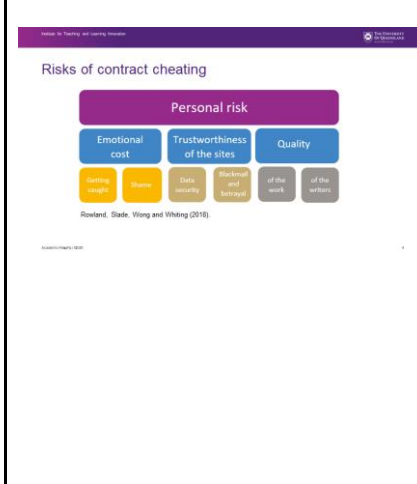
- Identify key misconduct types with online assessment: plagiarism, collusion, impersonation, contract cheating.
- Pose the question “Why do students cheat?” Possible responses are: student unclear of assessment requirements, family expectations to excel, high stress levels, lack of preparation, lack of language proficiency, perception there are lots of opportunities, dissatisfaction with the teaching and learning environment, poor ethical decision-making skills and/or situational ethics.
- Encourage students to propose strategies to help deal with some of these situations.

**Discuss the impact of cheating on the individual.**



- Interpret this slide.
- Discuss why the level of student concern about (contract) cheating is very similar for the Cheating Group and the Non-Cheating Group in this survey of attitudes to cheating. (N=14 086 students/8 unis)
- Pose the question: “What impact does a student cheating have on others?” Possible responses are: Not fair for some students to work hard for their grades while others don’t; might have to work with a cheating student in a future assessment and they’re unable to contribute as much as they should; could get drawn into misconduct processes if the student cheats in group work.

**Discuss the risks of contract cheating.**



- Advise students you know contract cheating occurs and your course team will look for it.
- Familiarise students with what contract cheating encompasses.
- Identify aspects of contract cheating sites students need to be aware of: qualifications advertised for writers are often untrue, writers will outsource to others, no guarantee of quality or a response that adequately addresses your assessment task criteria.
- Warn students about the untrustworthiness of these sites – they have all of your data/details. They are unscrupulous and can extort students now and during their professional life for many years to come.



## UQ takes academic misconduct seriously.

UQ takes academic misconduct seriously

**Incidences**  
Jan 2017 – Jan 2019: >1400 cases of academic misconduct

**Penalties**

Penalties include:

- re-submission of an assessment or automatic failure of a course (lower-end offences)
- suspension or expulsion (more serious or repeated misconduct).

- Advise students of cheating incidents. From January 2017–2019, the university dealt with over 1400 cases of academic misconduct including contract cheating.
- Describe penalties. Being caught for academic misconduct at UQ can result in penalties for the offender including:
  - resubmission of an assessment or automatic failure of a course for lower-end offences
  - suspension or expulsion for more serious or repeated misconduct
  - a combination of penalties.