



National
Academic
Integrity
Network

FINDING THE THREAD:

CONTRACT CHEATING MASTERCLASS FOR SENIOR LEADERS

Dublin- 9 May, 2022

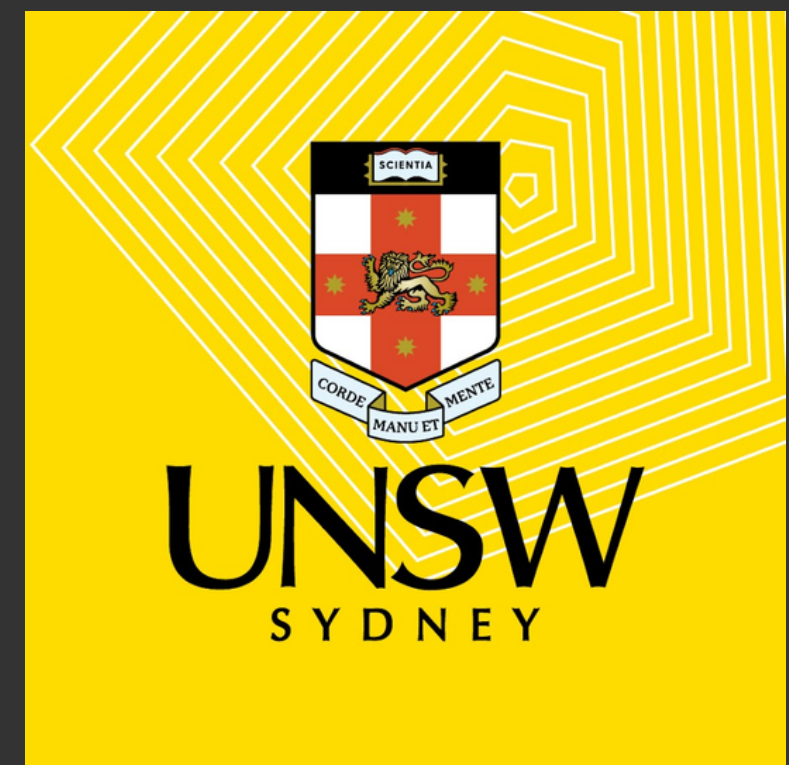
Cath video



Kane Murdoch

Manager

Conduct and Integrity Office



- **Introductions, housekeeping**
- **Australian Story**
- **Assessing the threat**
- **Institutional response**

DUBLIN, 9 MAY 2022





- **Approaches to detection**
- **Courageous Conversations**

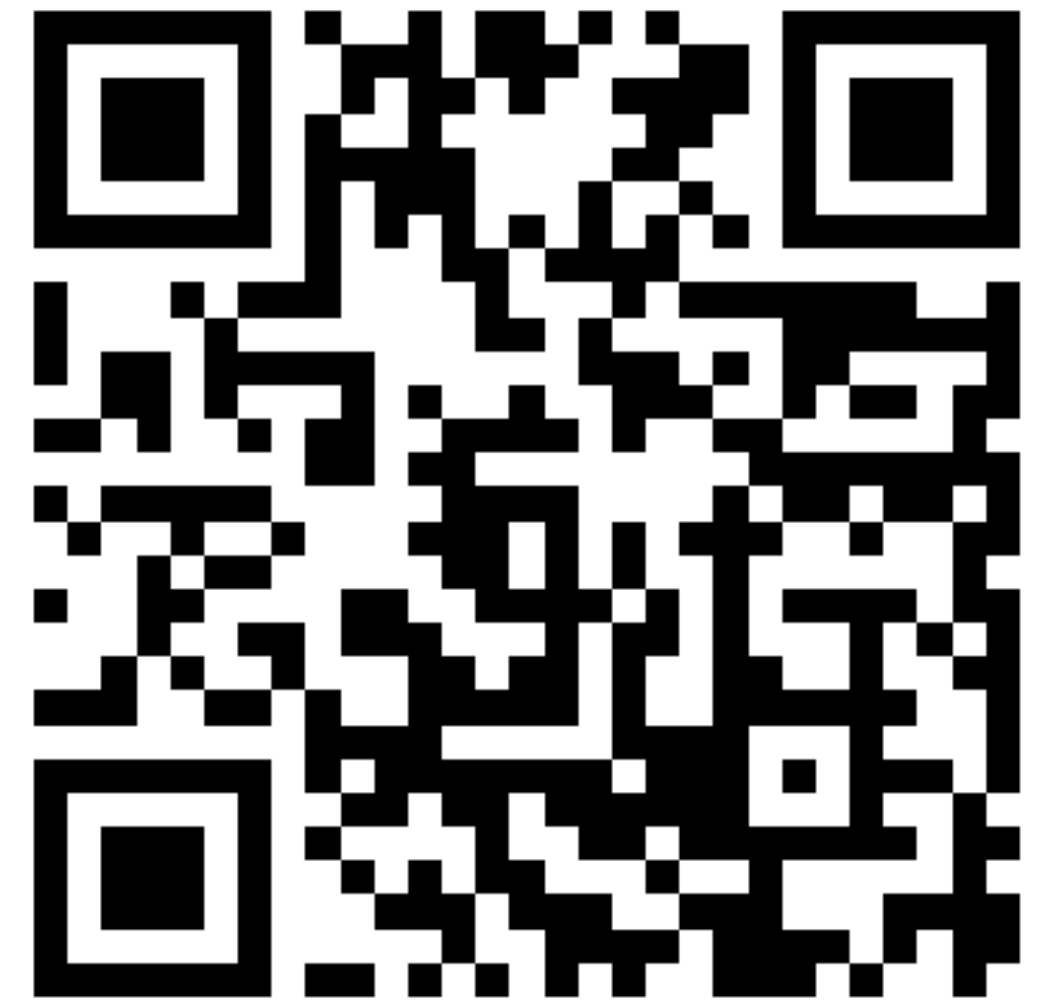


Working definition of contract cheating for this session

When a student engages a third party, paid or unpaid, to complete one or more assessments on their behalf.



Quick Poll



[https://pollev.com/
kanemurdoch365](https://pollev.com/kanemurdoch365)

Australian Story



FRONT PAGE NEWS

**Students enlist MyMaster website to write essays,
assignments**

SYDNEY MORNING HERALD, NOVEMBER 12, 2014

FRONT PAGE NEWS

Australian unis should take responsibility for corrupt practices in international education

THE CONVERSATION, APRIL 20, 2015

FRONT PAGE NEWS

70 Uni Students Facing Potential Suspension Over MyMaster Cheating Scandal

PEDESTRIAN, MAY 9, 2017



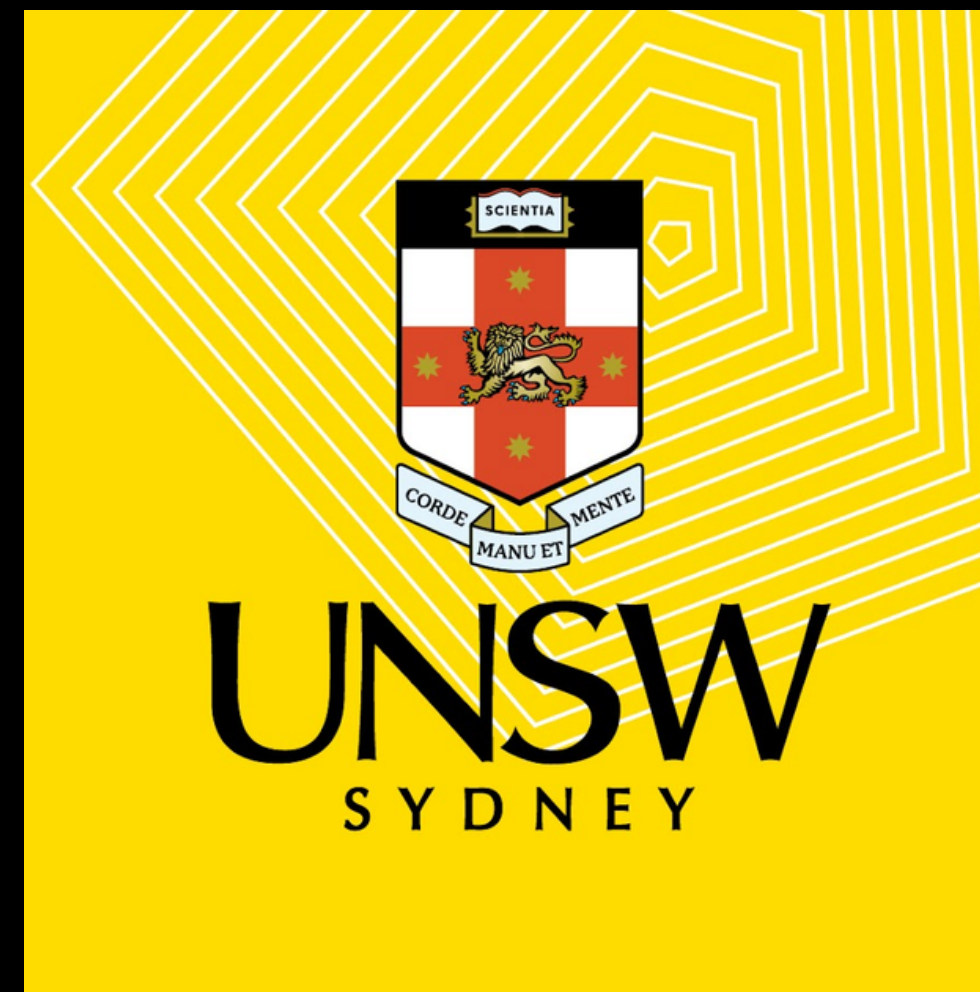
Australian Government

Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency



TEQSA

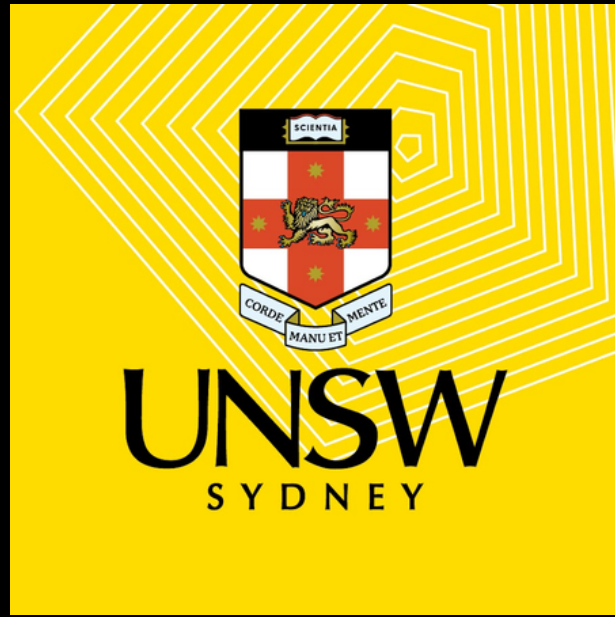




Conduct and Integrity Office



Make it someone's job



Cheating found at UNSW up by 2000% as new detection methods used

Ghost writers helping UNSW students to cheat on assessments, leaked report reveals

**transparency, public
reporting, student messaging,
consequences -- "dirty little
secret"**

A magnifying glass is positioned over a document, focusing on the word "Research". The background shows a blurred document with some text, including "places", "and will dis", "collaborations", "Will also d", "sures on", "Last time", and "very".

Research

2018- **6%** of Australian students are engaged in contract cheating.

2022- **10%** of students contract cheating

BUSINESS MODEL



The "infernal" business model

Can we design contract cheating
out of assessment?





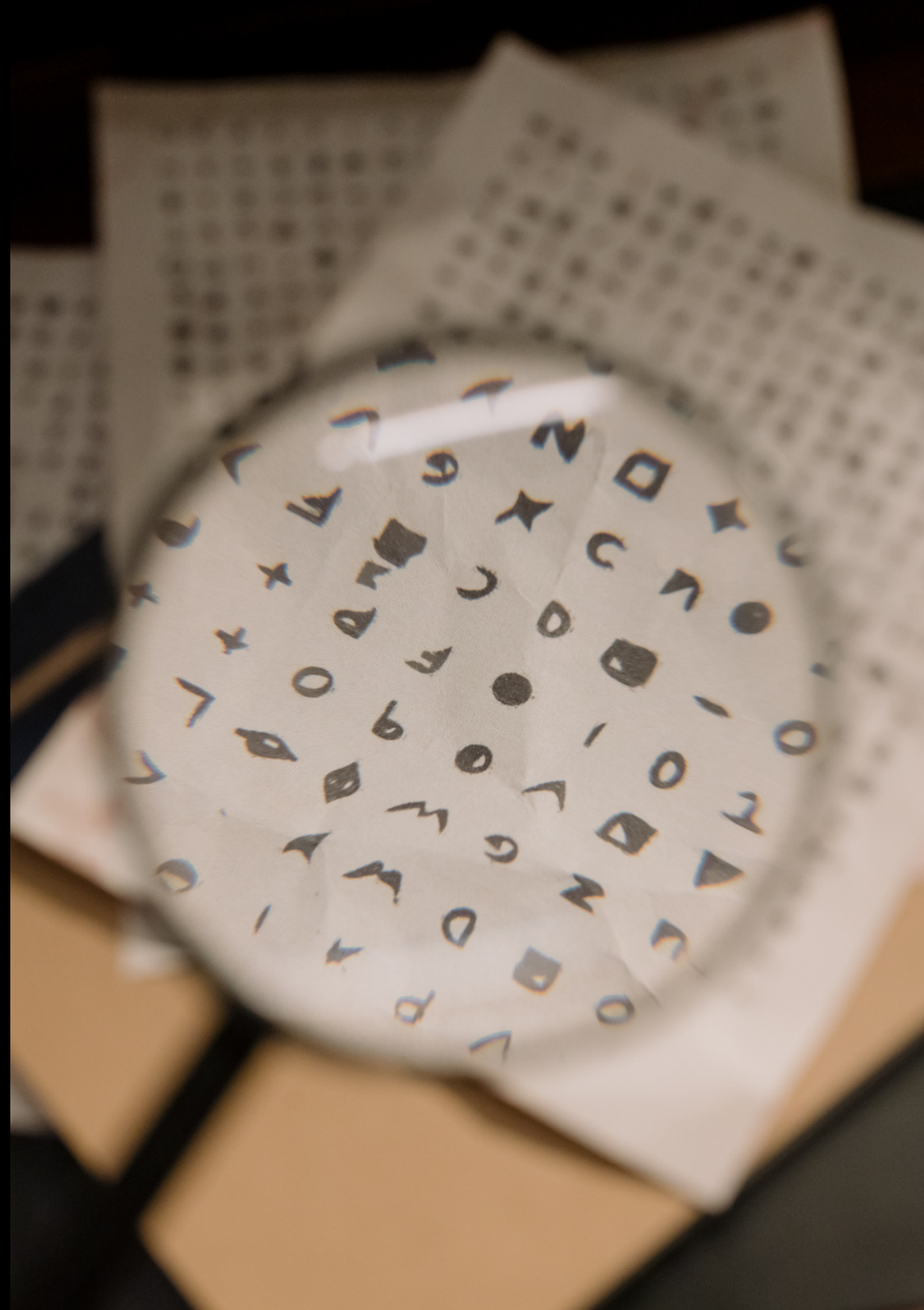
What do staff think?

Impossible to prove

57.1%



assessment comparison



**Do markers know
what's happening?**

Where has the research
taken us?



Attitude to Cheating

Create downward pressure

Strategy

High

Compliance Risk

Low

Deliberate:
Is unable to learn with integrity and has not intention of doing so

Strongest penalties available

Compel:

Exclusion and permanent record on transcript

Opportunistic:
Is able to learn with integrity but prefers not to

Deter by detection

Direct:

Formal warnings, suspension, impermanent record on transcript, Permanent record on log, mandatory remedial education

Inadvertent:
Wants to learn with integrity but is not always able to do so

Help them

Monitor:

Data collection and analysis, reporting and evaluation, Voluntary educative interventions, additional academic skills support, academic penalties, breaches permanently recorded on log

Voluntary:
Prefers to learn with integrity and is able to do so

Increase awareness

Advise:

Education and training, targeted academic skills support,

Fully compliant:
Would never cheat and is motivated and able to learn with integrity

Make it easy and rewarding

Support:

Clear and consistent guidelines and guidance, information and communication, encouragement, engagement, reassurance and reward

High

Compliance Cost

Low

Assessment Security

Academic Integrity

"There are many circumstances where 'cost to cheat' is effectively zero"

Phillip Dawson, Defending Assessment Security in a Digital World

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Assessing the Threat

It's not just essay mills

A blurred background image of a business meeting. Several people in professional attire are visible, some standing and some sitting at a table. A laptop is open on the table in the foreground. The lighting is warm, suggesting an indoor setting with windows in the background.

Essay Mills

**"[...]a huge cynical,
corrupt and
exploitative operation"**

Paul Greatrix, Registrar, University of Nottingham



Impersonation

**Do you know your
students?**

7.8 million

Chegg Subscribers

\$3.6 billion

Course Hero valuation

The Challenges



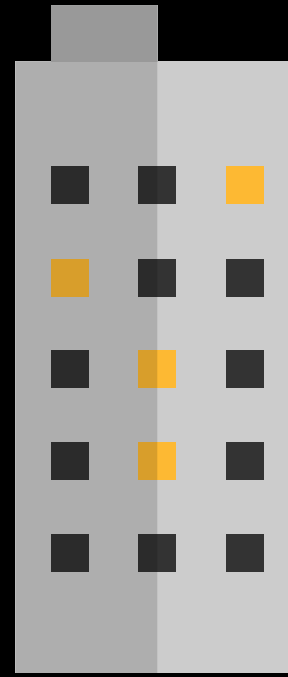
Myth busted

The Challenges



A Problem of scale

The Challenges



Institutional Maturity

Policy and operational agility

phil dawson p7 or 8

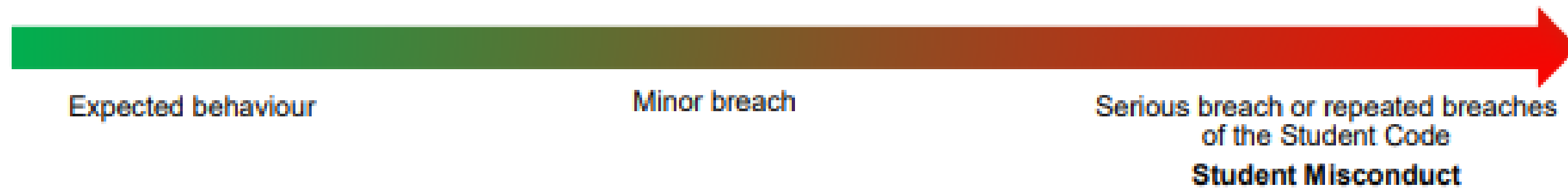


Figure 1: Spectrum of breaches under the Student Code

Finding the Thread?



**Whistleblowers
(and
Blackmailers)**



Academic markers



Referral slide

Data markers



excel

Cohort slide

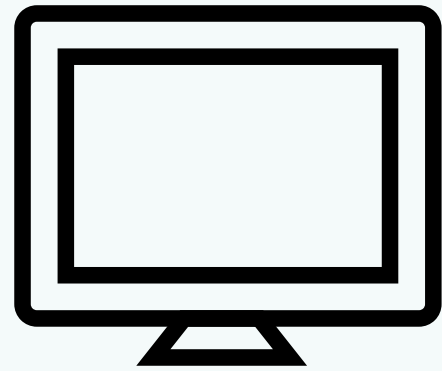
Admission documents



INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE

transparency and leadership

from the top



**Ongoing information
and messaging to
students**



Assessment



**Proactive cyber-style
response to contract
cheating**



ASSESSMENT

ANALYSIS

PROGRESS

PERFORMANCE



Assessment CHANGE THIS

Turnitin and assessment

Courageous Conversations





Expected behaviour

Minor breach

Serious breach or repeated breaches
of the Student Code
Student Misconduct

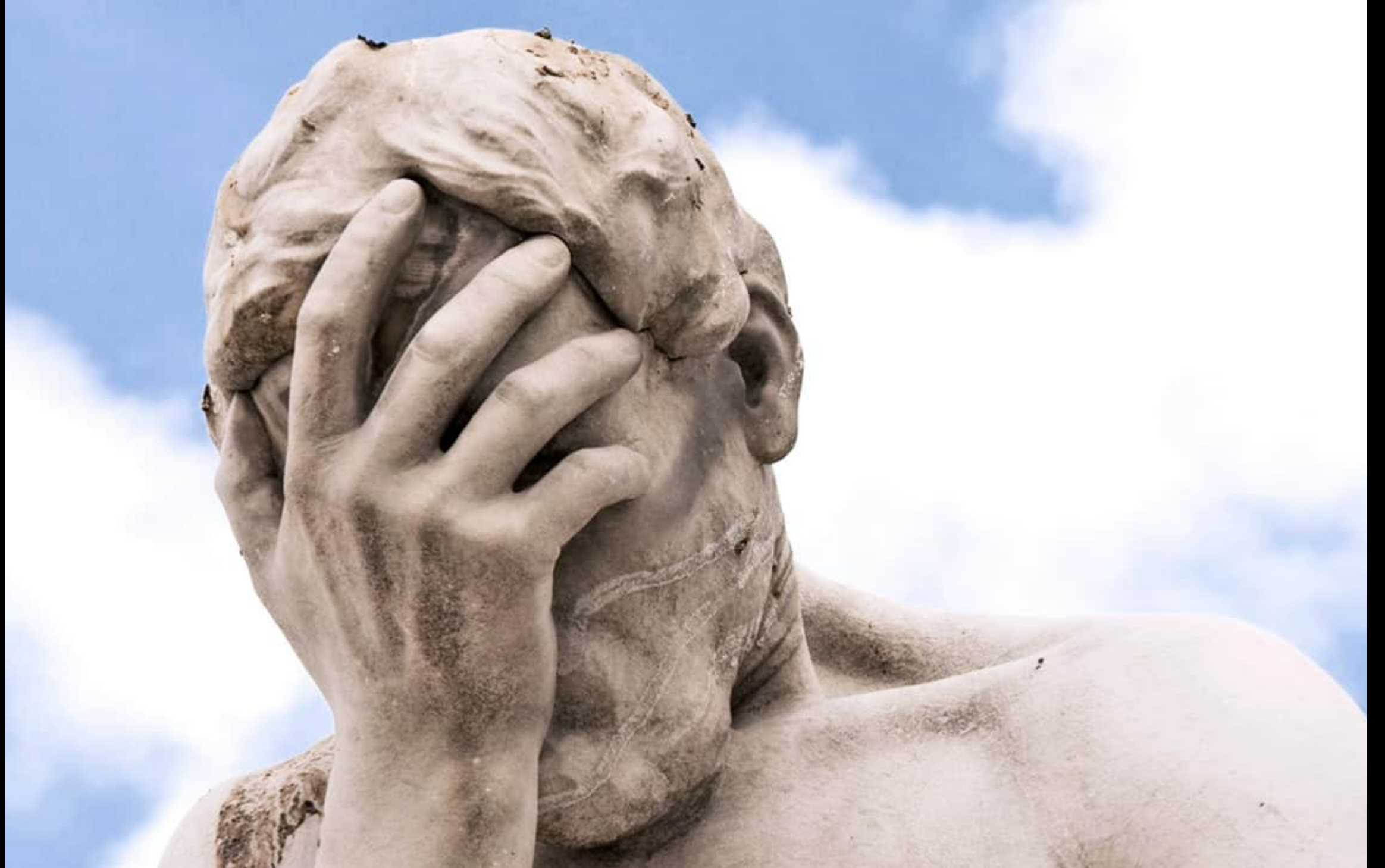
Wrongdoers vs Learners



How we frame student conduct needs to change.

We need to remember that we are educators, and not punishers.

Student responses to misconduct



Reconciliation

**A different approach
comes with risks, and
rewards.**



Legalistic processes

Student misconduct processes and language are often framed in terms of criminality



The Cohort

Time	User full name	Event context	Component	Event name	Origin	IP address
9/09/18, 17:55		Turnitin Assignment 2: Investigation 3: static friction	Turnitin Assignment 2	Add Submission	web	27.33.202.129
9/09/18, 17:51		Turnitin Assignment 2: Investigation 3: static friction	Turnitin Assignment 2	List Submissions	web	27.33.202.129
9/09/18, 17:49		Course: PHYS1110-Everyday Physics T2 2018	User report	Grade user report view	web	27.33.202.129
9/09/18, 17:45		Turnitin Assignment 2: Investigation 3: static friction	Turnitin Assignment 2	Add Submission	web	27.33.202.129
9/09/18, 17:43		Turnitin Assignment 2: Investigation 3: static friction	Turnitin Assignment 2	Add Submission	web	27.33.202.129
9/09/18, 17:40		Turnitin Assignment 2: Investigation 4: n water	Turnitin Assignment 2	List Submissions	web	27.33.202.129
9/09/18, 17:39		Turnitin Assignment 2: Investigation 3: static friction	Turnitin Assignment 2	Add Submission	web	27.33.202.129
9/09/18, 17:37		Turnitin Assignment 2: Investigation 3: static friction	Turnitin Assignment 2	Add Submission	web	27.33.202.129
9/09/18, 17:35		Turnitin Assignment 2: Investigation 3: static friction	Turnitin Assignment 2	List Submissions	web	27.33.202.129
9/09/18, 17:34		Turnitin Assignment 2: Investigation 4: n water	Turnitin Assignment 2	List Submissions	web	27.33.202.129
9/09/18, 17:33		Turnitin Assignment 2: Investigation 3: static friction	Turnitin Assignment 2	Add Submission	web	27.33.202.129
9/09/18, 17:30		Turnitin Assignment 2: Investigation 3: static friction	Turnitin Assignment 2	Add Submission	web	27.33.202.129
9/09/18, 17:26		Turnitin Assignment 2: Investigation 3: static friction	Turnitin Assignment 2	Add Submission	web	27.33.202.129
9/09/18, 17:24		Turnitin Assignment 2: Investigation 3: static friction	Turnitin Assignment 2	Add Submission	web	27.33.202.129
9/09/18, 17:21		Turnitin Assignment 2: Investigation 3: static friction	Turnitin Assignment 2	List Submissions	web	27.33.202.129
9/09/18, 17:20		Turnitin Assignment 2: Investigation 3: static friction	Turnitin Assignment 2	Add Submission	web	27.33.202.129
9/09/18, 17:18		Turnitin Assignment 2: Investigation 3: static friction	Turnitin Assignment 2	Add Submission	web	27.33.202.129
9/09/18, 17:14		Turnitin Assignment 2: Investigation 3: static friction	Turnitin Assignment 2	Add Submission	web	27.33.202.129
9/09/18, 17:09		Turnitin Assignment 2: Investigation 3: static friction	Turnitin Assignment 2	Add Submission	web	27.33.202.129
9/09/18, 17:06		Turnitin Assignment 2: Investigation 3: static friction	Turnitin Assignment 2	Add Submission	web	27.33.202.129
9/09/18, 17:01		Turnitin Assignment 2: Investigation 3: static friction	Turnitin Assignment 2	Add Submission	web	27.33.202.129
9/09/18, 16:58		Turnitin Assignment 2: Investigation 3: static friction	Turnitin Assignment 2	Add Submission	web	27.33.202.129
9/09/18, 16:54		Turnitin Assignment 2: Investigation 3: static friction	Turnitin Assignment 2	Add Submission	web	27.33.202.129
8/09/18, 22:28		Turnitin Assignment 2: Investigation 3: static friction	Turnitin Assignment 2	Add Submission	web	27.33.202.129
8/09/18, 20:22		Quiz: Quiz 2 T2 2018	Quiz	Quiz attempt reviewed	web	27.33.202.129
8/09/18, 19:58		Turnitin Assignment 2: Investigation 3: static friction	Turnitin Assignment 2	Add Submission	web	27.33.202.129

Changing Procedure





**So what does
a Courageous
Conversation
look like?**

**Collaboration between academic and
professional staff**

**Raising "concerns", rather than
allegations**

Principles

Natural Justice Framework

Be seen as just, as well as
actually just.

Principles

Developing Ethical Fitness

We have taken the view that handling misconduct is an educative process, and we are helping students develop the "ethical fitness" to avoid mistakes.

Principles

Do no harm

We have aimed to avoid the unnecessary emotional costs that misconduct processes can burden students with

Principles

Embrace the
"teachable
moment"

We have taken the view that handling misconduct is an educative process, and we are helping students develop their "ethical fitness."

Building a referral



Investigators need more than suspicions



Know your content, know your students, know your course



Academics ideally provide "discipline informed academic advice", strongly based in their subject expertise



Investigators need all of the evidence supporting the referral, in as "clean" a form as possible



Factual, impartial, information that outlines what could possibly explain what you see (best light and worst light) is more valuable than opinions coloured by emotion

The Process

How it works in practice

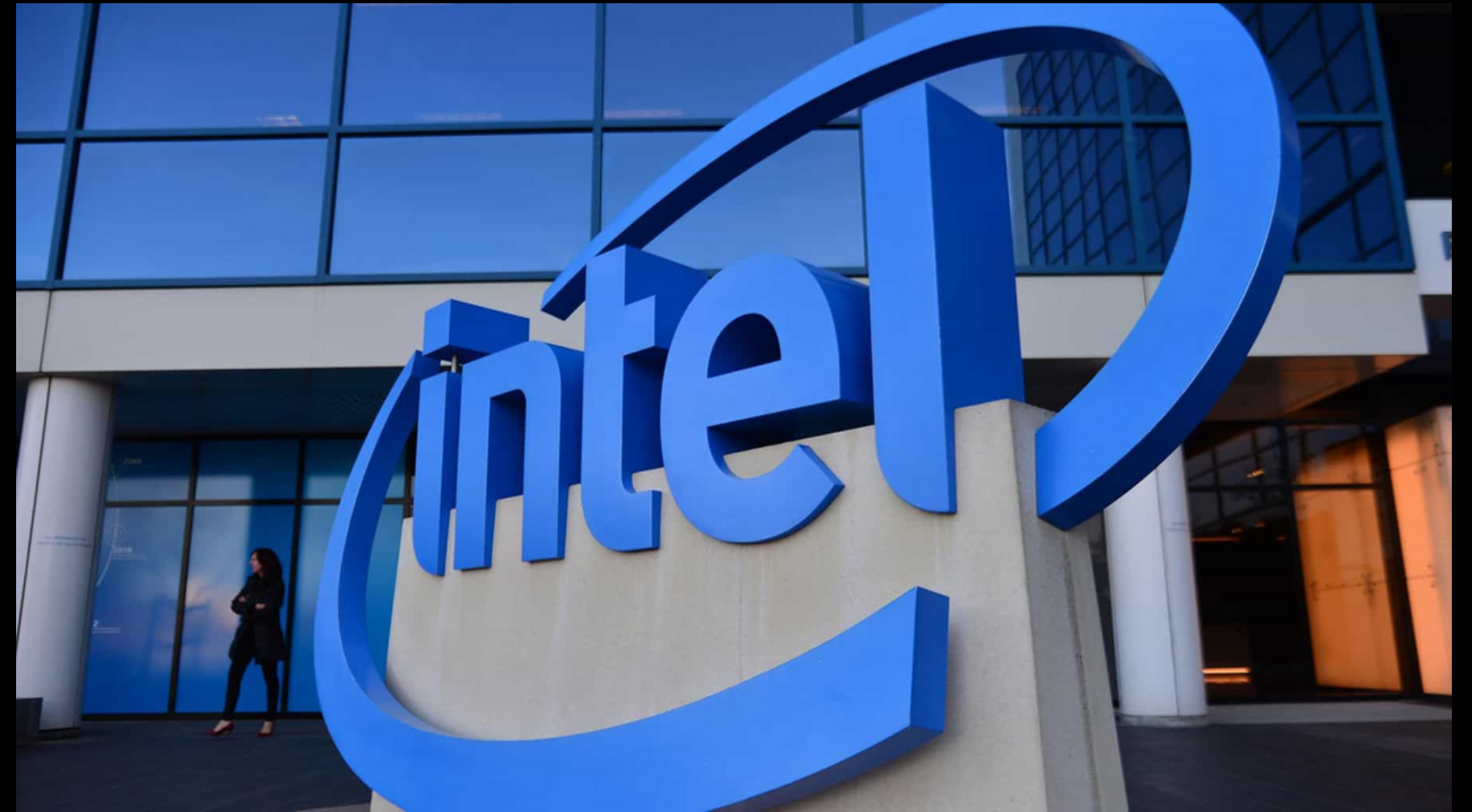
- 01 Student Conduct and Integrity Unit (SCIU) conduct an assessment of referral, often received from Faculty.
- 02 If there is sufficient evidence to raise concerns with a student, SCIU contact the student, providing all evidence in hand, asking for a meeting or written response.
- 03 Student may choose to admit to the concerns raised, or to refute the concerns.

The Process

How it works in practice

- 04 If a student provides a "full and frank" admission, a Determination is issued.
- 05 If a student refutes the allegation, the formal investigative process commences
- 06 In the case of a concern which is denied, but later proven, student lose the opportunity to receive a reduced outcome.

**When students admit to
their conduct, they offer
more information**



What are the benefits of a Courageous Conversation?

-
- **Students acknowledge their mistakes**
 - **The misconduct outcomes match the learning outcomes**
 - **Students remain part of our learning community**

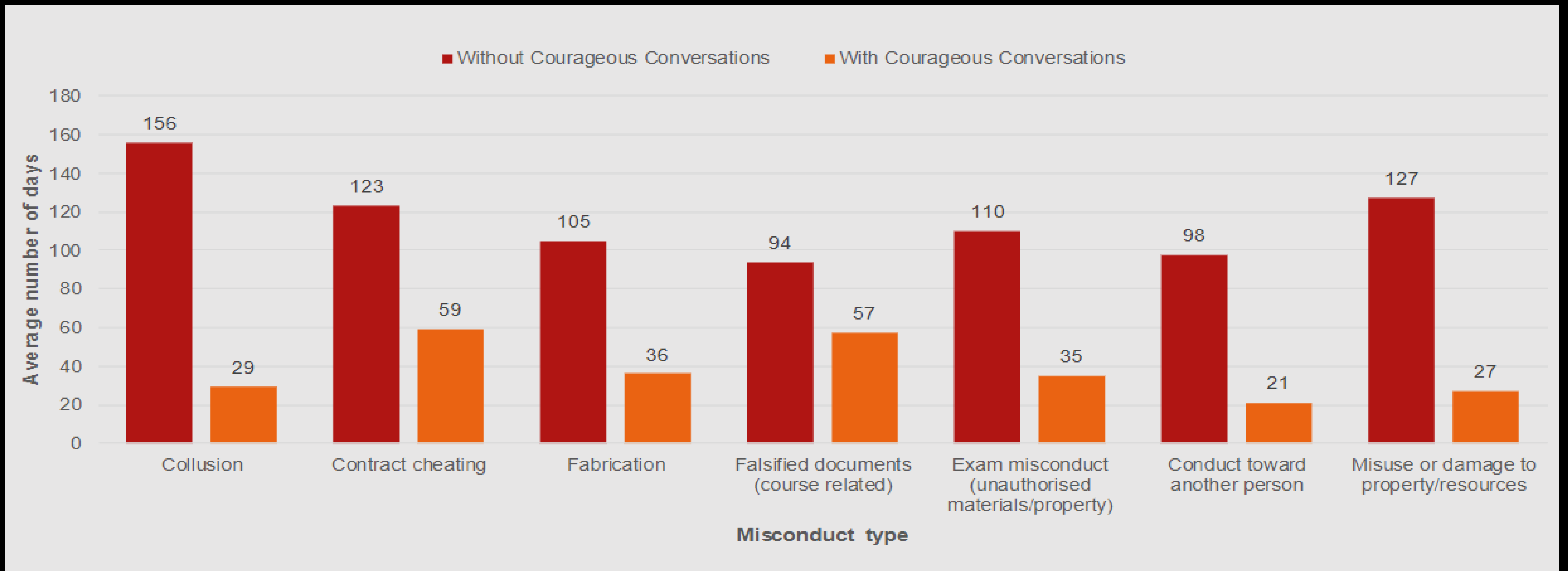
-
- **Reduced burden on staff, both workload and emotionally**
 - **Retains focus on education, and not punishment**
 - **Students remain part of our learning communities**

**Courageous
Conversations have
tangible benefits for
everyone involved**

64%

**Reduction in misconduct case
completion times (compared to pre-
Courageous Conversations)**

Reduced cost for greater compliance.



Source: UNSW Conduct and Integrity Office annual report, 2019

How do students respond?

- **"I would like to apologize"**
- **"I understand the gravity of my mistake and I deeply regret what I have done"**
- **"Thank you for being so thoughtful; it means a lot"**
- **"Thank you for your email and your generosity that allowed me to have this discussion before taking formal action"**
- **"I have been waiting for this email for a long time so I finally have an opportunity to confess what I did wrong in the past. It is truly a relief to admit the mistake I made during the exam."**
- **"I dispute the concerns and want to straighten this out as soon as possible."**

Summary



Significantly improved student experience



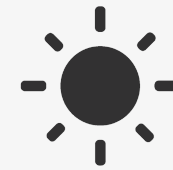
Greater collaboration between academic and professional staff



Reduced timeframes and cost for completion of misconduct matters



Improved understanding of trends in misconduct



Encouraging students to embrace integrity

THOUGHT EXPERIMENT



Questions for consideration:

- Institutional processes for assessing evidence provided by the Irish Times?
- Is contract cheating defined in your procedures?
- Procedural bases for acting on alleged misconduct?
- Staffing available to undertake investigations?
- Understanding of investigations among those staff?

THE NEXT DAY...

Questions for consideration:

- Level of understanding among academic integrity decision makers?
- Does your policy/procedure cater for historical cases?
- Standing on penalties?
- Have you specified a procedural right to revoke a degree?
- Are you prepared to revoke degrees?
- Media



Recommendations

- **Data-centric**
- **Combine your efforts**
- **Use best practice for assessment design, but don't expect a panacea**
- **Make it someone's job**
- **Transparency in your leadership**

Recommendations

- **Assessment**
- **Combine your efforts**