



Policy on Prevention, Detection and Penalty for Contract Cheating

Introduction

All students are expected to undertake their studies with integrity, honesty, integrity, and in full adherence to the University has an obligation to ensure students meet established academic standards.

The Higher Education Act (Law No. 7/2021) prohibits contract cheating and outlines both financial and disciplinary penalties for such occurrences.

It is therefore important that all students understand what contract cheating is, how to ensure they avoid it, the penalties that the University can impose, and the possible longer-term risks associated with contract cheating.

The University [Students general rules and discipline rules](#) applies to all students of the University irrespective of their mode or place of study, and provides guidelines on actions that can be taken to deal with academic misconduct including activities associated with contract cheating.

What is Contract Cheating

Contract cheating is a form of cheating where a student submits work to a higher education provider for assessment, where they have used one or more of a range of services provided by a third party, and such input is not permitted. The contract with the student can include payment or other favours, but this is not always the case. The third party could include anyone other than the student (family members, friends, freelance academic writer etc.

Examples of contract cheating include:

- obtaining another person's assignment with the intention of submitting it as your own work or engaging a writing service to write an assignment on your behalf,
- providing or receiving exam assistance during an exam. E.g. allowing someone to read your paper or copying off another student's paper,
- sitting an exam for someone else or allowing someone else to sit an exam for you,
- getting another student, family member or friend to help you complete an online quiz or any other assessment item,
- allowing a tutor to rewrite sections of or your entire assignment.

Responsibility of Staff

Individual staff has a responsibility to:

- a) understand the policies and procedures of MNU, the Faculty/School/Centre and the Department with respect to academic honesty including plagiarism, co-operation and groupwork, and to apply them consistently;
- b) Be aware of the penalties prescribed under the Higher Education Act (7/2021).
- c) explain to students both good scholarly practice and the concept of contract cheating;
- d) ensure that adequate information is provided to students about referencing requirements and academic conventions for the use of others' work, as appropriate for the discipline;

- e) provide students with early notification and fair warning if they believe any individual or group may be at risk of breaching guidelines relating to contract cheating;
- f) refer students to sources of advice on academic writing;
- g) ensure that allegations of contract cheating of a student are based on firm evidence.

Responsibility and Rights of Students

Students have a responsibility to:

- a) read, understand and respect the Policy on Contract Cheating;
- b) Be aware of the penalties outlined in the Higher Education Act (7/2021).
- c) Avoid all acts which could be considered as contract cheating;
- d) Seek assistance from appropriate sources when they recognize a need for additional knowledge or skills.
- e) Seek assistance from appropriate sources when they are aware they need more knowledge and skills.

Students have a right to:

- a) be informed of the policies of MNU, the Faculty/School/Centre, with respect to academic honesty such as contract cheating
- b) be provided with clear guidelines on academic styles required in each subject;
- c) receive practical comments which assist them to review their work;
- d) expect clear guidelines relating to all aspects of groupwork;
- e) expect early notification or fair warning in the case where an academic believes a student or group of students may be at risk of breaching guidelines relating to contract cheating
- f) participate in appropriate learning experiences designed to improve their competency in writing and study skills, understanding of the requirements of groupwork, and development of personal attributes, in particular, ethical behaviour;
- g) expect a consistent interpretation of contract cheating and consistent application of procedures for dealing with suspected contract cheating across the MNU.

Procedure for Investigation of Allegations of Contract Cheating

The procedure for investigating allegations of contract cheating and plagiarism is outlined in Annex 1.

Penalties

The Disciplinary Committee may impose additional penalties in accordance with the University's policies, in addition to those prescribed under the Higher Education Act.

Student Support

Student Support Services are available to advise students alleged to have breached the Policy on contract cheating.

Students are advised to read and familiarize themselves with the Guidelines on Contract Cheating (Annex 2).

Appeals

A student who wishes to appeal a decision of the Disciplinary Committee must follow the appeal procedure outlined in the Students' General Rules and Discipline Rules.

Responsibility for implementation of the Policy

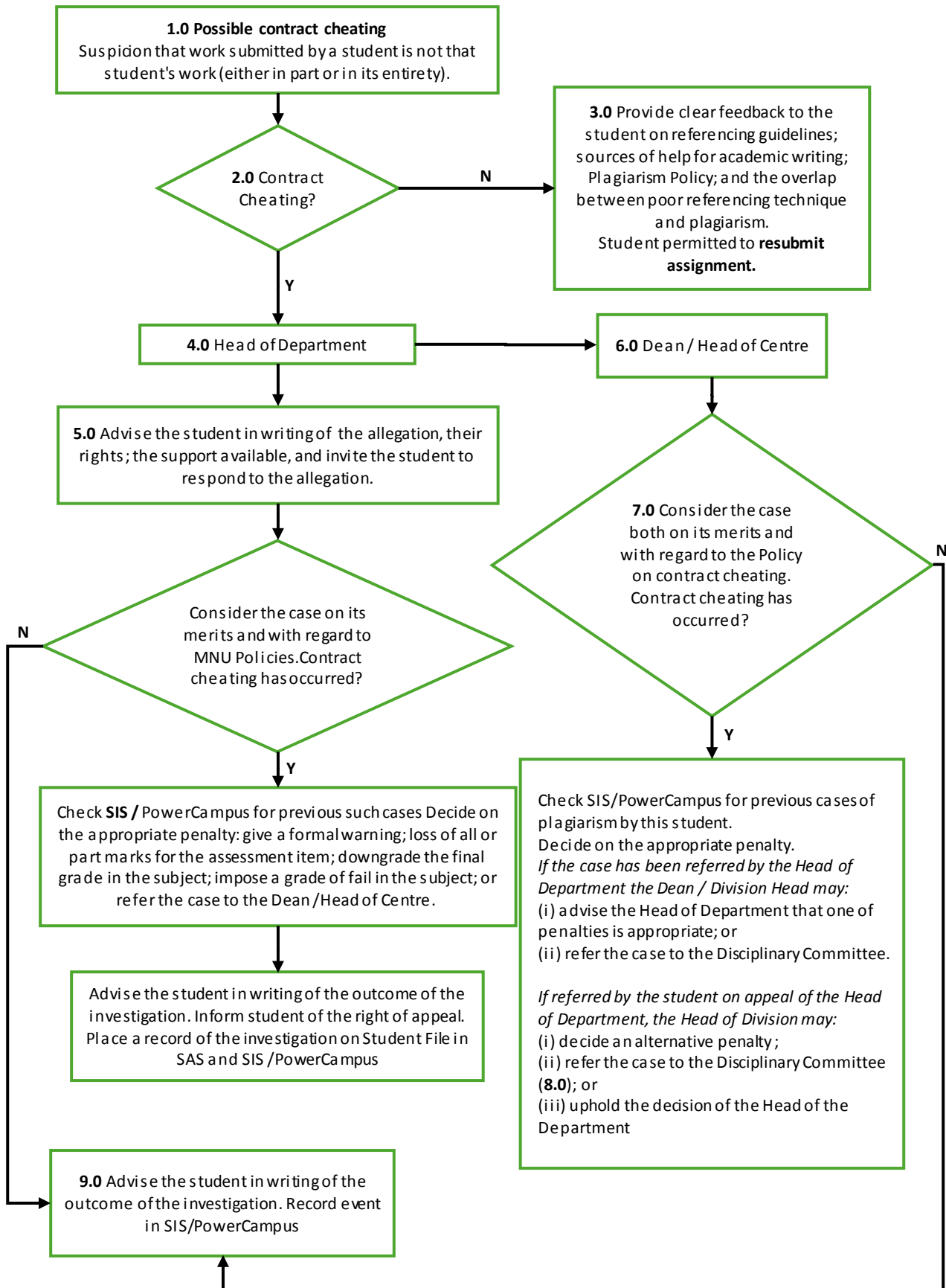
The primary responsibility for the implementation of this policy lies with the Dean of the respective Faculty/School/Centre.

Approved on: 14 September 2025

Approved by: Academic Senate

Date of Implementation: 14 September 2025

Annex 1: PROCEDURE FOR INVESTIGATION & SUBSEQUENT ACTION FOR ALLEGATIONS OF PLAGIARISM



NOTES ON THE PROCEDURE IN THE FLOW CHART

1.0 Consistency

It is important that any allegation of plagiarism is dealt with according to the MNU's Policies and Procedures. All staff need to be aware of the policy and procedures. To facilitate consistency in the application of the procedures, where there is a Head of Department, the staff member should consult with, or refer the matter entirely to, the Head of Department, as appropriate. If the staff member is junior and/or casual and/or there are several markers across the course, then the matter should always be referred to the Head of Department.

2.0 Contract cheating?

The staff member who discovers the irregularity and/or the Head of Department must decide on whether the incidence is a case of plagiarism or of poor referencing skills. In making this decision, the following should be considered:

- the extent of the suspected plagiarism (similarity percentage excluding references and names),
- the experience of the student at MNU level (i.e. more leniency would be shown in the case of a first-year student),
- the apparent intention to deceive.

3.0 Opportunity to resubmit

The assessment task should be marked on its academic merit. If this results in a Fail grade because of poor referencing technique, the decision may be made to allow the student to resubmit the item, provided that this would not result in inequities for other students. The maximum mark available for a resubmit is a Pass mark of 50%.

4.0 Conflict of Interest

If the Head of Department is the staff member who raises the suspicion of contract cheating, then another person from the Department should perform the Head of Department role in the investigation and resolution of the plagiarism issue.

5.0 The Investigation

The Head of Department must, in writing, and as soon as possible:

- i. notify the student of the allegation;
- ii. enclose a copy of this Policy;
- iii. draw the attention of the student to the student's rights and to the help available;
- iv. give the student a reasonable period, being a period of not less than seven days, to seek advice about available options; and
- v. invite the student to respond to the allegation.

The Head of Department should determine the medium for the student's response having regard for the student's circumstances, for example, an on-campus student could be given the option to respond in person or in writing; an off-campus student could be given the opportunity to respond in writing, or if the circumstances warranted it, by telephone. In the case of distance students, to facilitate timeliness, email may be specified as the medium, providing that the student has access to email.

The student may invite a support person to any meeting. The support person may provide the student with advice, but may not act as an advocate nor make direct comment to the meeting without the permission of the Head of Department.

6.0 Case referred to the Dean / Head of Centre

The case may be referred to the Dean by the Head of Department or by the student on appeal of a decision of the Head of Department.

7.0 Investigation by The Dean

The Dean will be given copies of all paperwork relating to the incident, including notes of meetings. The student should be given the opportunity to further answer the allegation if they choose to do so. (refer to 5.0 above).

8.0 Case referred to Student Disciplinary Committee

- The case may be referred to the Faculty Disciplinary Committee by the Dean or by the student on appeal from the decision of the Head of the Department. The rules and mandate of the Faculty Disciplinary Committee is outlined in [Students general rules and discipline rules](#).

9.0 Record Keeping

At each stage of the investigation records should be gathered of all relevant documentation including:

- the assignment or other piece of work in which the alleged plagiarism occurs
- records of meetings / phone conversations with the student
- copies of correspondence, including emails, on the matter

The records of each case of plagiarism in which a penalty is imposed are logged on to the central Student Information System / PowerCampus. At the same time, the soft copies of the documents should be filed by the Student Administrative Services office in the Student File.

The Student File is not accessed during the investigation of suspected plagiarism. Once it is determined that a penalty should be imposed in a case of plagiarism the Head of Department, the Dean or the Student Disciplinary Committee should consider previous cases of plagiarism for this student in which a penalty was imposed before deciding on the appropriate penalty. Access is only given to the Student File of the student(s) involved in the case, not to other plagiarism records.

If, following an investigation of plagiarism, a penalty is not imposed, the record of the investigation is not kept in the Student Administrative Services office. But the investigation may be recorded in the Student Information System / PowerCampus.

10.0 Timeliness

Investigations of contract cheating and advice to the student of the outcomes of the investigation must be dealt with in as timely a manner as possible. The response from the university at each stage should be within seven working days. Students required to respond to allegations of plagiarism should be given at least seven working days to respond to the allegations at each stage.

11.0 Appeals

A student who wishes to appeal a decision of the Head of Department may appeal to the Dean.

A student who wishes to appeal a decision of the Dean may fill in the Appeals Form and submit it to the Vice Chancellor in accordance with the guidelines set forth in the [Students' General Rules and Discipline Rules](#).

Guidelines for penalties for contract cheating

Penalties should be given according to MNU Policies and guidelines and as specified in the Higher Education Act (Act No. 7/2021)

Annex 2: Guidelines on Contract Cheating for Students

Risk and Consequence: reasons why you should not Contract Cheat

- 1. Disciplinary Consequences:** The University will not accept any form of Contract Cheating, and the Faculty Disciplinary Committee has the authority to impose a number of sanctions, including in the most severe cases, expulsion from the University. All students are forewarned that the academic sanctions imposed may prevent a student from receiving their degree award or lead to the immediate of the student from the University.
- 2. Risk of Blackmail.** You should also be aware that academic sanction is not the only consequence of contract cheating. There is a growing trend in which third parties extort further financial payment from students who engaged in contract cheating, i.e., blackmailing the student into handing over more money. The blackmailer will indicate that if further payment is not received, they will inform the University (regardless of whether you are an existing student or graduate) or, in future, an employer, of prior dealings with them (irrespective of whether the material provided was actually used by you). Such “legacy for life” blackmail may continue indefinitely.

What to do if you are Blackmailed: The University does not wish to see any student victimised in this way, regardless of the fact they have cheated. The University will therefore support any student who is a victim of blackmail, regardless of the reasons. Students in such situations are strongly advised to contact either the Batch coordinator or Dean as soon as possible. Whilst informing the University that you have committed an academic offence will result in a disciplinary investigation, this is ultimately preferable to being blackmailed.
- 3. Detection.** You should not be deceived by claims made by third parties that their work will not be detected. The ‘original’ piece of assessed work created by a third party can be recognised using various detection methods. MNU uses sophisticated detection processes, including, but not limited to, Turnitin detection software, website searches and agreements with online services to provide us with upload and download data should our assessment questions or similar appear on their websites. You should be aware that academics can reliably detect the tell-tale signs of contract cheating, for example by a change in writing style, the use of inappropriate academic literature, inclusion of unexpected content, etc., all clues that the work is not of the student. If staff suspect that a submission is not that of the student, then they are duty bound to investigate and refer the case to the Faculty Dean/Head.
- 4. Peer Reporting.** The vast majority of MNU students uphold our values of integrity and professionalism and wish to protect the value of the MNU degree. If you are aware that other students have submitted work that is not their own, you should feel confident in reporting this to the University via your subject lecturer, subject coordinator or via email. Reports of any academic misconduct are always treated in the strictest confidence.

Likewise, if you are approached by a third-party offering contract cheating services, you should immediately inform the respective authority (Ministry of Higher Education) and your course coordinator.
- 5. The Psychological Cost:** Those who cheat ultimately live with the psychological cost associated with feelings of guilt and damage to self-respect. The feeling of guilt and the impact this has can be far reaching. It can also be stressful waiting for the outcome of a disciplinary investigation which can take several days and may delay your ability to progress as planned in your programme of study. Delays may have financial consequences in terms of reassessment fees, repeating of subjects and other logistical matters related to accommodation. Any student suffering from stress or feelings of guilt, whatever the reason, should seek advice from Student Support.

How to Avoid Contract Cheating

1. Do not seek assistance from anyone else to complete any part of your assessed work. It is better to submit an incomplete answer (for which you might get some partial credit) than to submit something produced by someone else. Whether you pay someone or not, whether there is a contract or not, if you submit the work of someone else as your own then this is contract cheating.
2. Do not be tempted to 'google' or search for any assignment or Timed Online Coursework (TOC) questions online. If you access an online service (e.g., an 'essay mill' or 'homework service') to upload a question OR to look at an answer, you run the risk of being detected and therefore suspected of contract cheating, even if you do not copy the answer into your coursework submission. Uploading any teaching or assessment materials created by MNU staff, including exam and coursework questions, is a breach of law.
3. Do not share, upload, or post any of your assessed work (pre or post submission) via any platform e.g., a third-party website, social media platform, email, etc. If another student uses your work in part or in full then they will be investigated for either collusion or contract cheating, and you will be suspected of collusion, even if you have not copied or used anyone else's work.
4. To avoid engaging in any form of academic misconduct, including contract cheating, seek help from the related lecturers or student support. These opportunities can help you develop your study skills – so that there is no reason for you to contract cheat.
5. Seek help when, through no fault of your own, you are unable to engage in your assessment. If you are unable to engage effectively with any assessed work due to events that are no fault of your own, then you should seek help from the subject teacher or subject coordinator. Never allow external pressure to tempt you to resort to cheating of any kind.

Note: *This policy and accompanying attachments are primary derived from the model plagiarism policy for University of Bristol (UK), Australian universities available from the University of New South Wales website. Some parts have been derived from similar policies of the following: Australian National University, Griffith University, Monash University; University of Newcastle, Australia; University of East Anglia, University of the Sunshine Coast, Bond University, Liverpool University, University of Melbourne, University of and QAA UK.*