

Dear Higher Education Team,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the proposed draft Bill addressing contract cheating.

[Name redacted] supports the introduction of this legislation to protect and enhance academic integrity in the higher education sector. Comments on the draft Bill are as follows:

- [Name redacted] seeks further clarification on the role of higher education providers (HEPs) in the detection and reporting of suspected and/or actual contract cheating instances. Will there be any obligations on providers to report instances of suspected or actual contract cheating to TEQSA? What information will be required? Timeframes? Will this detail be included in the legislation? If there are no obligations on providers to report instances of actual or suspected contract cheating to TEQSA, what methods of detection will be used?
- Is it envisaged that repeated instances of contract cheating at a provider will impact the provider's HEP status or TEQSA risk rating? Will/can any compliance action against the provider (eg, audit or investigation) be taken if TEQSA believes the instances of contract cheating that have occurred at that HEP are excessive? [Name redacted] takes academic integrity issues very seriously and has robust practices and processes in place to ensure students are aware of their obligations and expectations and any academic misconduct allegations are managed effectively. The decisions of few students to engage in contract cheating should not adversely impact the provider or result in adverse repercussions for the provider.
- Will contract cheating convictions or open investigations be publicly reported by TEQSA? If so, has any consideration been given to the potential for reputational damage to the HEP associated with these investigations/convictions? [Name redacted] is concerned that reputational damage by association to the instance(s) of contract cheating will ensue. The potential for reputational damage may also influence a reluctance amongst HEPs to report instances of contract cheating. It is suggested that consideration is given to withholding HEP details if/when releasing information on contract cheating convictions or investigations. Perhaps the use of de-identified data in publicly available reports could also be considered.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. If you require any further information regarding the above comments, please contact me.

Kind Regards,

[Name redacted]