Under the direction of an Academic Honesty Working Party, sponsored by the Pro-Dean, the Business School has undertaken a long-term project (2009-date) to improve academic honesty outcomes. Following a trial in selected Disciplines, the School applied new academic honesty procedures to all units of study in Semester 2, 2010 and then continued the procedures throughout 2011 and forwards.

The process undertaken can be grouped into three categories:

1. Increased student education to prevent unintentional academic dishonesty and encourage good practice.
2. Increased staff education and use of text-matching software to allow effective and consistent detection of plagiarism.
3. Changes to procedures for managing detected plagiarism, including expanded opportunities for students to revise and resubmit their work.

**STUDENT EDUCATION**

In the past, all students were required to complete a detailed online academic honesty module and indicate on the coversheet for each assignment submitted that they had done so. Anecdotal evidence suggested, however, that many students were not completing the module, and that student knowledge about academic honesty could be improved.

To address this issue, the School revisited the AH module, clarifying some content and building in a final self-assessment which referred students to further information and assistance, including in-person assistance, in areas of weakness. The School also made the module a mandatory assessment task in all units, notifying students in classes and UoS outlines that failure to complete the module with a mark of 80% would result in an Absent Fail grade in all units of study undertaken within the Faculty. Students could take the online module as many times as they necessary to obtain this grade, and need to pass it only once in their candidature.

Academic Honesty is also being included as a topic in core units in many Business School degree programs. Academic Honesty is taught in core first year units and is integrated and embedded into the learning and assessments within the units.

For all undergraduate students, there are compulsory tutorials that cover academic honesty, referencing and also literacy skills such as effective summarising and writing. In week 2 of the core first year unit, all students undertake a diagnostic assessment on their writing and referencing skills. The outcomes from the diagnostic assessment are:

1. No problems shown. Student is a competent writer and able to reference properly
2. Able to write but referencing shows problems
   a. Student must attend a compulsory workshop on referencing and then resubmit the diagnostic assessment.
   b. If the resubmission shows the referencing problems are resolved the student need not attend any further workshops although they are made available.
   c. If the resubmission shows the referencing problems are not resolved, the student is referred to their tutor for one to one assistance and teaching.
3. Able to reference but writing, summarising etc shows problems
   a. Student must attend a compulsory workshop on writing and then resubmit the diagnostic assessment.
   b. If the resubmission shows the writing problems are resolved the student need not attend any further workshops although they are made available.
   c. If the resubmission shows the writing problems are not resolved, the student is referred to their tutor for one to one assistance and teaching.
4. If problems with both referencing and writing, must attend both workshops
5. For really severe problems, evidence of language difficulties, no ability to summarise, serious referencing errors, students must undertake BUSS1900 Business Communications. The unit covers literacy skills, summarising, effective study techniques, correct referencing etc. In 2011 there was no official unit, rather students had to attend a 9 week series of workshops where they covered the same materials. Student feedback was that they were glad to have done the work but requested that something appear on the transcript to reflect the extra learning undertaken. To that end BUSS1900 was created and is in use for 2012. BUSS1900 is zero credit unit and students are not required to pay anything to undertake the unit. It is however compulsory for students referred to the unit in order to complete the degree.

All postgraduate students undertake a diagnostic assessment. Those found with very severe problems must undertake a unit on Communication Skills BUSS5100. The unit covers literacy skills, summarising, effective study techniques, correct referencing etc. Students with lesser problems are referred to workshops.

In addition to online and in class education, small-group AH workshops are run by the Faculty’s Teaching fellow twice a week through semester time. These are available to all students. Students who had been identified as having problems within an assignment in any unit are referred to one of these additional sessions before being required to resubmit their work.

DETECTION OF PLAGIARISM AND ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

All assignments are submitted electronically and all assignments are run through text matching software. All Assignments are checked for academic honesty issues by each marker when assessing assessments.

The Business School implemented a training program among academics and markers to assist markers in the detection of plagiarism. Techniques and tools taught to academics include traditional methods such as “reminds me of something”, looking for embedded data in assignments, use of Google and other full text search engines as well as access to text matching software. Full training in the use of text matching reports and also the academic decisions required when assessing is given to all staff.

The Business School uses Turnitin for text matching software. Academics are provided with detailed training about how to interpret Turnitin reports. Regular workshops were offered but academic staff proved resistant to attending workshops. To address this, one on one at desk support was offered. For the first two assignments that an academic is required to read text matching reports, a support academic sits with the marker and explains how the reports works, teaches what to look for and how to interpret reports and also gives advice of the standards required and what should be referred for further action. Additional support is available but practice has shown that after two assignments a marker has learned all that is needed in use and interpretation of reports and is able to carry on alone.

All judgements as to plagiarism and academic honesty are academic judgements. To this end, each report from each assignment is looked at and assessed. No arbitrary rules such as “above a certain percentage” are permitted.

One of the main benefits to the use of text-matching software was the improved detection of student-to-student copying, an issue otherwise difficult to identify in large classes and across years. Further, increased detection of plagiarism has allowed focused education to be offered.

MANAGEMENT OF DETECTED PLAGIARISM

One significant change was made to the School’s process for managing cases of alleged plagiarism. This process proved to have excellent education benefits and so was continued as existing practice.

Whereas any student who had allegedly plagiarised to any extent had previously been required to meet with the Director of Academic Appeals, this requirement was only applied to those cases identified as severe or potentially dishonest from semester 2, 2010. Before contacting students, the Director’s office now conducts a detailed analysis of any assignment identified as containing academic honesty issues, and offers students whose work contains what appears to be minor or unintentional plagiarism the opportunity to attend a remedial workshop, review and resubmit their work without meeting the Director should they wish to do so. Students are, of course, still offered the opportunity to have a meeting if they wish, but most opt not to. All students offered this remedial learning have taken the option of further targeted learning and then reviewed and resubmitted their work.

Follow through of these students have shown virtually no recidivist behaviour. The combination of detection and targeted education has proven effective.

OVERVIEW

The Business School has adopted a combined approach of mandatory checking all assignments, effective and targeted education and a policy where every instance of academic dishonesty or plagiarism is followed through. The combination of these three processes have resulted in significant change of student behaviour. Students have now fully engaged with the education offered and instances of detected plagiarism or dishonesty have dropped markedly.