

How Much Does Cheating in Higher Education Cost?

Academic cheating has surged, with impacts that reach far beyond individual exams. This overview, grounded in recent market research, explores the wide-ranging consequences of academic dishonesty.

Cheating Is Pervasive—Detection Measures Must Keep Up



During their academic career, **up to 70%** of students **admit to cheating**,¹ but **less than 2%** say they've **been caught**.²

Institutional Staff Pay the Price of Reported Cheating Cases

As cheating cases are reported, institutions bear the brunt of the burden. The immense time commitment required to investigate these cases strain both faculty and administrative teams.



933 HOURS
by academic staff per year³



1,764 HOURS
by administrative staff per year⁴

The Strain on Staff Carries Real Financial Costs

Managing academic misconduct comes at a steep price. These figures represent the equivalent cost of the extensive staff time spent investigating and addressing suspected cheating.⁶



\$121,500
spent per
1,000 cases
of suspected misconduct⁵

Cheating Leads to Additional Costs

In addition to the time and resources lost during misconduct investigations, institutions incur other costs as well. Together, these factors threaten the overall stability of educational institutions.

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL IMPACTS



- Loss of accreditation
- Loss of funding
- Lawsuits from students
- Replacement questions for compromised exams

REPUTATIONAL CONSEQUENCES



- Decreased enrollment
- Loss of employment credibility
- Media scandals

STUDENT HARM



- Loss of degree value
- Loss of program for current students
- Suspension, expulsion, or a black mark on record
- Negative behavioral impacts

1. Psychology Today, "The Real Roots of Student Cheating" (2003)
 2. Journal of Research in Education, Volume 32, Issue 2, "Academic Cheating in Online and Live College Courses During the COVID Pandemic"
 3. The Cheat Sheet, Issue 298, "Increased Cheating Costs US Public Colleges \$196 Million in Annual Staff Costs"
 4. Higher Education Policy Institute, 2024, "The Financial Impact of AI on Institutions Through Breaches of Academic Integrity"
 5. The Cheat Sheet, Issue 298, "Increased Cheating Costs US Public Colleges \$196 Million in Annual Staff Costs"
 6. Higher Education Policy Institute, 2024, "The Financial Impact of AI on Institutions Through Breaches of Academic Integrity"

Want more data about the state of academic integrity in higher education? Read our article for the latest information.



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