GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY

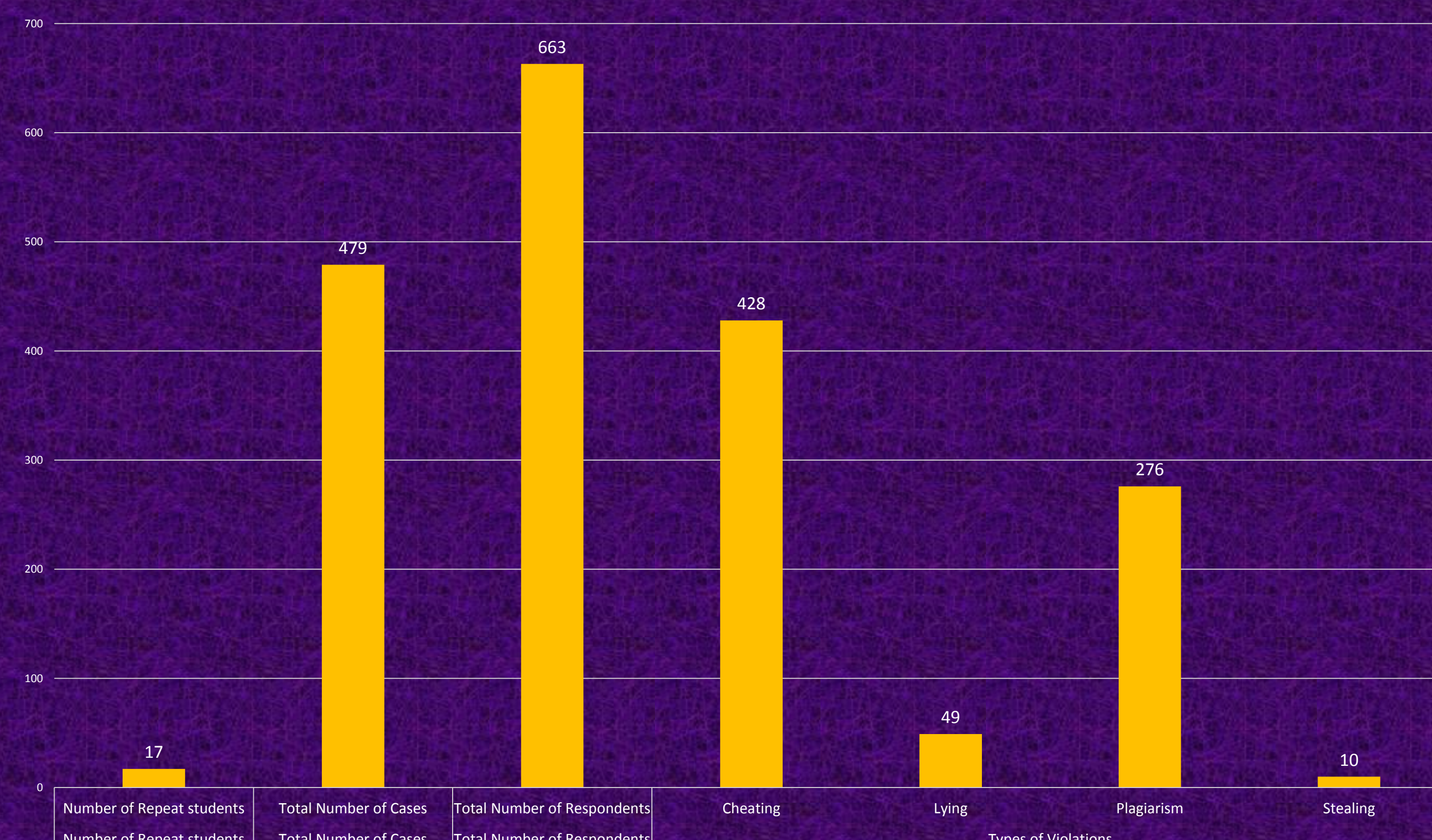# Academic Integrity

Best Practices

- Consider allowing collaborative assignments. Many of the referrals received by our office are related to unauthorized collaboration, but research shows that students learn better when allowed to work collaboratively. Develop group contracts to track who is responsible for which part of a group assignment.
- Try reserving a larger classroom for exams so students are not sitting near one another. This combined with alternate test versions can reduce instances of academic misconduct.
- Provide student access to Safe Assign to double check their citations and quotations prior to submitting an assignment for grading.
- Have an Honor Code statement on each assignment/exam that students must sign prior to beginning the assignment/exam.
- Do a device check prior to an exam beginning. If students are only allowed a specific type of calculator for example, make sure the student checks in and verifies the calculator is correct.
- Consider an experiential assessment as opposed to a test or exam. This can take the place of a project that builds on itself as the semester proceeds, culminating in a final deliverable/presentation at the end of the semester.

What to Avoid

- Try not to reuse the same assignments and exams from semester to semester. Students share, even when instructed not to.
- Avoid vague instructions on your syllabus and assignments. Be very specific about what is allowed and what is not allowed (collaborative efforts, specific calculator types, etc.)
- Do not attempt to negotiate an integrity outcome with the student. This presents an unbalanced approached to integrity at Mason. We have a centralized process that allows for equity.
- Try to avoid assignments/exams that rely on rote memorization.
- Make sure you are grading assignments in a timely manner. Failing to do so can inadvertently result in a student repeating a behavior that rises to the level of an academic integrity violation. However, because the initial incident was not reported, they have not been given an opportunity to learn from or rectify their behavior to avoid repeat incidents.
- Avoid using unsecured physical drop off locations for assignments. Use Blackboard or email for students to submit assignments.
- Do not make assumptions around student knowledge. Many faculty members assume students are aware of the various citation styles and formats. It is better to review expectations with regards to citation styles.

Annual Statistics: 2016-2017

Type	Value
Number of Repeat students	17
Total Number of Cases	479
Total Number of Respondents	663
Cheating	428
Lying	49
Plagiarism	276
Stealing	10

More detailed statistics available upon request by contacting oai@gmu.edu

Reporting Procedures

All cases of suspected dishonesty must be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity. Forms and instructions can be found at oai.gmu.edu.

If you are uncertain about sending a referral, feel free to call us at 703-993-6209 for a consult.