

Position Title:	Lawyer
Staff Division:	Advocacy & Legal
Employment Status:	Full time, Ongoing
Classification Level:	PL7, <i>University of Melbourne Student Union Agreement 2023-2025</i>
Reports to:	Principal Lawyer
Reported to by:	NIL
Incumbent:	New Position
Date Effective:	TBA

The University of Melbourne Student Union Inc (UMSU)

The University of Melbourne Student Union Inc (UMSU) is a dynamic, for-purpose incorporated association, serving as the representative body for all students at the University of Melbourne. Structured around student control of student affairs, UMSU is governed by an elected Students' Council and twelve student departments, chosen by and from the student body.

Located in the heart of the University of Melbourne's award-winning student precinct, UMSU is a vibrant, creative, and diverse social justice organization committed to representing and supporting University of Melbourne students. Our vast arts and culture programs for emerging student artists are run in a state-of-the-art theatre, a professional art gallery, the iconic Rowden White Library and the Ida Bar – the only student bar on campus.

Our commitment extends beyond engagement to essential support services, including a free legal and advocacy service for students. We host events co-designed by students supported by professional staff, and publish multiple student-led publications, including *Farrago*. Beyond that, UMSU runs a food relief program, oversees over 1000 student volunteers, and has more than 200 affiliated student clubs.

UMSU's overarching goal is to enhance student life at the University of Melbourne. We achieve this by elevating and representing student voices through purposeful engagement and advocacy, offering exceptional programs, services, and opportunities that promote inclusivity and accessibility. Each of our dedicated student departments, committees, and collectives play a pivotal role in shaping the university experience.

Staff at UMSU are organised within four divisions with multiple teams:

- Advocacy & Legal
- Arts & Culture
- Student Representation
- Operations & Communication

The information contained in this position description is intended to describe the nature and level of work to be performed. This is not considered an exhaustive list of all the responsibilities, duties or skills required in the role.

The UMSU Constitution establishes that we will:

- Advance the welfare and interests of students.
- Represent students of the University within the University and to the community.
- Provide amenities and services, principally for students and other members of the University community, and incidentally to the public.
- Provide an independent framework for student social and political activity.
- Develop, maintain and support student clubs, societies and associational life generally.
- Promote and defend the rights of students to education on the basis of equality without regard to race, colour, sex, sexuality, gender identity, age, physical disability, mental illness, economic circumstances, political religious or ideological conviction, or national or social origin.
- Oppose violence and/or hatred through militarism, nationalism, or discrimination on the basis of race, colour, sex, sexuality, gender identity, age, physical disability, mental illness, economic circumstances, religion, or national or social origin.
- Provide a democratic and transparent forum in which students' affairs and interests can be
- Governed in an effective and accountable manner.
- To promote free and accessible government-funded education.

To support these objectives UMSU staff observe the following values:

- Student Led and Focused
- Inclusive and Connected
- Effective and Engaged
- Accountable, Transparent and Responsive

Divisional Overview

The Advocacy & Legal Division encompasses a co-located community legal centre and an advocacy service available to students of the University of Melbourne.

The UMSU Legal Service provides free legal and financial counselling services to students at the University of Melbourne, as well as engaging in law reform and advocacy activities and community legal education.

The UMSU Advocacy Service provides an advisory and advocacy service to students of the University of Melbourne in relation to formal and informal university procedures.

Staff in the Advocacy & Legal Division are also responsible for providing information and other forms of support to the elected student representatives of UMSU.

Position Summary

The legal service lawyer is primarily responsible for providing high level support and advice and limited legal representation to students at the University of Melbourne. The position will also contribute to the development and delivery of the Legal Service's community legal education, volunteer pro bono and law reform and advocacy programs.

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UMSU offers workplace flexibility and opportunities for remote work, however as an organisation providing student-facing services and events, an inherent requirement of this role is the ability to work in person and on site when required. Umsu staff employment conditions are covered by the *University of Melbourne Student Union Agreement 2023-2025* and associated policies, such as the Flexible Work Policy.

Key Accountabilities

Legal Advice and Casework

- Provide legal assistance to students in a manner that is consistent with the Community Legal Centres Australia's *Risk Management Guide*, the terms and conditions of the Legal Service's professional indemnity insurance (PII) and in compliance with the legal obligations under the *Legal Profession Uniform Law* (Victoria).
- Provide referrals to external agencies where appropriate.
- Ensure all records of Legal Service work are prepared, appropriately reviewed, maintained and destroyed in an accurate and professional manner.
- Provide regular reports to the Principal Lawyer on issues relating to the provision of legal services and significant emerging occurrences or trends.

Liaison, Community Legal Education (CLE) and Law Reform

- Work with the paralegal and volunteers to develop and disseminate fact sheets and articles relevant to students' legal concerns.
- Under the guidance of the Principal Lawyer, contribute to the identification of law reform issues and strategies to advance student rights.
- Work cooperatively with the Principal Lawyer and other staff to develop and deliver legal projects, community legal education and law reform work.
- Under the guidance of the Principal Lawyer, prepare law reform and policy submissions to government and other bodies as required.

Volunteer and Pro Bono Programs

- Assist the Principal Lawyer to develop and co-ordinate volunteer and pro bono programs, including working with volunteers and secondees.
- Provide referrals to pro bono partners where appropriate.
- Work with pro bono partners on Legal Service projects.
- Assist the Principal Lawyer in identifying and pursuing pro bono opportunities.

Level of Supervision and Typical Activities

The Lawyer operates with a degree of autonomy under the direction of the Principal Lawyer and will be supervised by the Principal Lawyer through regular supervision meetings, organisational performance development processes and ongoing training opportunities. The role is responsible for the provision of accurate, timely and appropriate legal advice and casework in compliance with the requirements of the *Legal Profession Uniform Law* (Victoria), *Community Legal Centres Australia Risk Management Guide*, and other professional rules. The role is also responsible for contributing to the Legal Service's community legal education, volunteer and pro bono programs, and to advocacy and law reform priorities. The Lawyer is required to work cooperatively and collaboratively with other staff in Umsu and will exercise judgement and interpretation in determining the day-to-day priorities of the position, under the guidance of the Principal Lawyer.

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The Lawyer is supervised to exercise independent judgement (on the basis of own knowledge, experience and legal precedent) in providing legal advice to students and suggesting appropriate courses of action to resolve legal issues.

The Lawyer is required to operate a significant caseload of legal cases and ensure that the most appropriate outcome is achieved.

A good working knowledge of the relevant legislation, applicable common law rules and precedents and the requirements of the *Legal Profession Uniform Law* (Victoria) is required to be maintained.

Health & Safety and Environmental Responsibilities of Staff

All staff are required to take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of other personnel who may be affected by their conduct. UMSU staff are required to understand and comply with the organisation's policies and procedures, including, but not limited to:

- *Workplace Conduct Policy*
- *Interaction Protocols Policy*
- *Child Safety Policy*
- *Health and Safety Policy*
- *Privacy Policy*
- *Constitution and regulations, such as the Financial Regulations*
- *Prevention of Sexual Misconduct Policy*
- *Fraud Risk Management Policy and Corporate Governance Policy.*

Flexibility to work remotely is subject to UMSU's *Flexible Work Policy* and relevant legislation, which applies upon commencement.

Key Selection Criteria

Essential Skills and Qualifications:

- A current Victorian practising certificate or eligibility to obtain one and 2-3 + years PAE.
- Demonstrated casework and advocacy experience in a number of the following areas of law: motor vehicle accidents, discrimination, tenancy, criminal law, traffic matters, infringements including fine negotiations and revocation applications, consumer issues, social security and other relevant matters.
- Ability to develop and deliver community legal education (CLE); undertake law reform projects and co-ordinate and supervise volunteer programs.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills, including the ability to communicate effectively with people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Demonstrated understanding of and commitment to social justice.
- Highly developed interpersonal skills, including negotiation and conflict resolution skills
- Demonstrated ability to work autonomously and within a small team environment to ensure goals are achieved.
- Well-developed organisational, time management and file management skills.
- A commitment to the principles of student unionism.
- A valid employee Working with Children Check.

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Desirable Skills and Qualifications:

- Experience in the community legal sector or legal aid.
- Experience in working in student organisations.
- Experience in working in a higher education environment.

UMSU is a child safe organisation, based on Wurundjeri country. We value diversity, embrace difference, and nurture a connected, safe, and respectful community. UMSU is a member of the Australian Network for Disability. We are committed to creating and maintaining a diverse, inclusive, and safe work environment.

First Nations' people, people of all ages, across all gender spectrums, people with disabilities and culturally and linguistically diverse people are strongly encouraged to apply.

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the lands on which we work, and that sovereignty has never been ceded. It always was, and always will be, Aboriginal land.