

<b>Position Number:</b>	135
<b>Position Title:</b>	Paralegal
<b>Division:</b>	Advocacy & Legal
<b>Employment Status:</b>	0.6 FTE, continuing
<b>Classification Level:</b>	Professional Level 4
<b>Reports to:</b>	Principal Lawyer or Supervising Lawyer
<b>Reported to by:</b>	N/A

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## 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 committees, 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 offerings include an arts and culture program for emerging student artists in a state-of-the-art theatre, a professional art gallery, and the iconic Rowden White Library. 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 volunteer programs, and supports over 200 affiliated student clubs.

Our commitment extends beyond engagement to essential support services, including a food relief program, volunteer opportunities, and a free legal and advocacy service for students. Each of our dedicated student departments, committees, and collectives play a pivotal role in shaping the university experience.

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.

UMSU staff are organized within five Divisions:

- Advocacy & Legal
- Arts & Culture
- Communications, Marketing and Events
- People & Community
- Office of the Chief Executive Officer

*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. This position description may be subject to change from time to time. Any such reorganisation of duties shall be the subject of discussion with the position incumbent.*

Each division is supported by a Student Advisory Group that is comprised of elected student representatives and designed to support ongoing collaboration between UMSU staff and elected student representatives. Student Advisory Groups provide feedback and advice from a student perspective to enhance participation in UMSU operated programs and services.

The UMSU Constitution establishes that we will:

1. advance the welfare and interests of students;
2. represent students of the University within the University and to the community;
3. provide amenities and services, principally for students and other members of the University community, and incidentally to the public.
4. provide an independent framework for student social and political activity;
5. develop, maintain and support student clubs, societies and associational life generally;
6. 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;
7. 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;
8. provide a democratic and transparent forum in which students' affairs and interests can be governed in an effective and accountable manner; and
9. To promote free and accessible government-funded education.

To support these objectives UMSU staff observe the following values:

- Student Led and Focussed
- 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 Advocacy Service provides an advisory and advocacy service to students of the University of Melbourne in relation to formal and informal university procedures.

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.

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

The UMSU Legal Service is a nationally-accredited community legal centre that provides free and confidential legal help and financial counselling to current University of Melbourne students.

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The legal service is staffed by qualified lawyers, and provides assistance on various legal issues, including:

- Renting
- Employment law
- Fines / infringements
- Minor criminal law
- Consumer law
- Car and bike accidents
- Family violence / personal safety
- Discrimination
- Sexual harassment
- Debts

### **Position Summary:**

To provide administrative and paralegal support to the UMSU Legal Service lawyers. The key purpose of the Paralegal role is to support the delivery of legal and financial counselling assistance by the UMSU Legal Service to students of the University of Melbourne.

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 as required. UMSU staff employment conditions are covered by the *University of Melbourne Student Union Agreement 2017-2021* or replacement agreement.

### **Key Accountabilities**

- Contact clients to assess their legal and financial counselling issues and their eligibility for assistance from the Legal Service.
- Proactively identify issues and appropriate solutions for clients.
- Support with the day-to-day case management of the Legal Service.
- Respond to email advice enquiries using template emails or letters as guided by the Principal/Supervising Lawyers.
- Maintain high quality client data and file management in our practice management system and support with administrative tasks as required.
- Running service reports and monitoring service evaluation survey requests, to produce reliable and comprehensive data for reporting purposes.
- Assist with service-specific projects as required (e.g. advocacy and law reform initiatives, developing and delivering community legal information).
- Any other duties that may be required to meet the needs of the Legal Service.

### **Level of Supervision and Typical Activities**

Working under general direction of the Principal Lawyer/ Supervising Lawyer, the incumbent will be expected to develop a breadth of administrative expertise and perform work assignments guided by policy, precedent and professional standards.

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## 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. OHS responsibilities applicable to positions are published at: [OHS Roles and Responsibilities](#). Flexibility to work remotely must be negotiated with a line manager, who will consider any legislative requirements, safety, the organisation's objectives, ways of working, impacts on other staff and student representatives, and the inherent requirements of the role.

All staff are required to understand and comply with the organisation's policies and procedures, including, but not limited to: the Acceptable Conduct Policy, Child Safety Policy, Occupational Health and Safety Policy, Privacy Policy, Financial Regulations, Social Media Publishing Policy, Publishing Regulations, and University of Melbourne's Provision and Acceptable Use of IT Policy.

## Selection Criteria

### Essential Skills and Qualifications:

- At least two years' experience in a legal administrative/paralegal setting.
- High-level written and oral communication skills.
- Skills and experience in communicating with young people and vulnerable clients.
- Project management and/or project coordination experience.
- Capacity to take initiative, problem solve and manage competing priorities.
- Demonstrated relationship management skills and ability to work effectively with a range of stakeholders (both internally and externally).
- Ability to work independently and as part of a team.
- A valid employee Working with Children Check.

### Desirable Skills and Qualifications:

- Completed or is undertaking a tertiary qualification in law (at least final year) or a relevant field.
- Experience in student legal matters, tenancy, employment, consumer issues, intellectual property or similar fields.
- Experience in community legal or not-for-profit sector.
- Experience working in a higher education environment.
- Experience working with student organisations.

*UMSU is a child safe organisation, located 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.*

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