

ADVOCACY SERVICE CHARTER

We Can Provide

- Free and confidential advice and assistance with negotiating the following academic and administrative issues with the University:
 - Discipline and misconduct allegations.
 - Disputes about assessment.
 - Grievances and complaints grounded in policy.
 - Intellectual property disputes.
 - Refund or remission of fees.
 - Supervision.
 - Unsatisfactory progress.
 - Special consideration or equitable adjustments.
 - Complaints about discrimination, sexual harassment or bullying.
- Referral to other appropriate services.

We Do Not Provide

- We cannot assist you in the following matters:
 - anything **unrelated** to your study (or prospective study) at Melbourne University;
 - attendance at informal negotiations and meetings with lecturers or supervisors - although we can advise and support you with recommendations on how best to approach the matter;
 - our resources are limited and if we cannot meet the level of service you expect then we may cease to assist you;
 - in the event that a relationship of trust and confidence cannot be established between the service and you, the service has the discretion to cease to assist you;
 - where the University's internal decision making process has been exhausted;
 - where there may be a conflict of interest.
- Additionally we cannot assist you with the following issues which are governed by specific procedures:
 - Counselling or psychological help.
 - Course advice or academic advice.
 - Visa advice and information for international students.
 - Legal Advice.
- We can refer you to the specialist services which can assist with these matters.

Information and Confidentiality

- When you contact the Advocacy Service, we need to ask you information about yourself and the issue you wish to discuss.
 - All information received is strictly private and confidential.
 - We adhere to Victorian privacy principles which are embodied in the *University of Melbourne Privacy Policy* (MPF1104) and privacy legislation.
 - We will not divulge any information provided by you without your consent (unless we are legally obliged to do so).

Your Rights

- To be treated with dignity, courtesy and respect.
- To be dealt with in a prompt and appropriate manner.
- To receive information in a clear and accurate format.
- To ask questions, make your own decisions and make informed choices.
- The right to privacy and confidentiality related to your issue.

How You Can Help Us.

- Work with us in good faith:
 - Give us accurate, honest and complete information so that we are fully aware of your circumstances.
 - You do not have to take our advice on a matter, however if you choose not to, we may be unable to assist you further.
- Bring all relevant documents to your appointment; including notices, letters and relevant correspondence with the University.
- Let us know if you can't keep an appointment.
- Treat our staff and volunteers with courtesy, respect and consideration.
- Be patient and please understand that we can be very busy at times.
- Understand that:
 - we will always endeavour to provide the best advice possible to assist you to resolve your problem favourably; however we cannot act in your place.
 - we have no coercive powers and cannot compel the University to act in a particular way.

How Can We Help You

- We offer independent information, advocacy and referral across a range of academic and administrative issues.
- Both undergraduate and graduate students are welcome to use this service.
- Individual support from an advocate is available by appointment.
- The Advocacy Service operates on an empowerment model - to this end we aim to provide you with:
 - expert advice on how to approach your problem in the context of the University's policies, procedures and statutory framework;
 - information and resources to help you to make informed decisions;
 - skills and resources to self-advocate and negotiate more positive outcomes.

Legal Advice, Information and Advocacy

The provision of advocacy and casework should not be confused with the provision of legal advice.

- Only a legal practitioner is entitled to provide legal advice.
- If we assess that you require legal advice we will refer you to the UMSU Legal Service or another legal service as appropriate.

Our Commitment to You

In order to provide you with a professional and accountable service, we aim to:

- Respond to your phone messages/emails within 24 hours
- Be honest and realistic with regard to the assistance we are able to provide.
- Let you know if we are unable to further assist you for any reason.

Making a Complaint

If you are unhappy with the service you are receiving:

- Let the advocate handling your case know and try to work the problem out with them;
- If you are unable to do this, you should speak to the Manager, Advocacy & Legal.
- If you are still unhappy, you are entitled to put a complaint in writing to the CEO, UMSU.
- If you require assistance with a complaint, please speak with the Student Services Officer at suashelp@union.unimelb.edu.au.