

## Student Union Advocacy Service Report July - September 2016

### Introduction

This quarter typically sees a high volume of appeals to the Academic Board in relation to both CUPC decisions and Special Consideration determinations. Typically assistance for students wishing to lodge Academic Board appeals is quite intensive and this is reflected in the volume of contacts this quarter.

### Programmes and Events this Quarter

#### *Annual User Survey*

The Advocacy Service conducts an annual survey of student users of the service and every two years we conduct a similar survey of key university staff who have direct dealings with the service.

This year the student survey was conducted during September. An invitation to complete the online survey was sent via email to just over 160 students who had indicated they were happy to be contacted for this purpose. A report on the findings is attached at **appendix 1** to this report.

#### *Peer Support Programme*

This quarter 162 students were assisted by 31 peer support volunteers.

### Trends and Issues this Quarter

#### *Mind the Gap - Students with Complex Needs*

We have previously reported on a growing number of students contacting the advocacy service for support with issues which are generally outside of the Service's charter. This extends from simple administrative queries, requests for help filling out special consideration applications or enrolment and course related forms; and extends to very complex matters involving advocacy-related issues interwoven with more general support needs. We believe that many of these issues were previously accommodated by local staff in Student Centres who were able to provide this level of direct assistance.

Many tertiary advocacy services include a welfare component which offers well-being services and support to students in addition to advocacy functions. The UMSU Advocacy Service has structured its service model having regard to the existing supports for students offered by the University. We have consciously sought to avoid duplication of existing services for students and focussed our charter on providing independent, expert advocacy on academic and administrative matters.

Accordingly the Service does not offer counselling or general emotional/psychological support. The Service is also unable to access student records, the SAS or other university administrative tools, and does not provide any form of academic advising.

The increase in contacts from students who do not fit neatly into the advocacy charter probably has a range of causes, including greater awareness and profile of the Service, the relative ease with which students can make direct contact with the Service via phone or drop in without lengthy waits; the concurrent change from the smaller local student centres, and shift from the comprehensive disability support at the erstwhile Disability Liaison Unit to the stripped down support offered under the centralised Stop 1 service model.

In any event, almost a year in to the major changes brought by the Business Improvement Program and the centralising and downsizing of student facing services at the University, the gaps in service delivery and/or accessibility have become increasingly evident. In this context, the Service is interested in liaising with the University to discuss options for the best way to fill the breach.

### ***Students with disabilities – inherent requirements or unlawful discrimination***

The Service also saw a number of cases last quarter where academic adjustments which had been assessed and approved by SEDS, were subsequently vetoed by the relevant faculty. The *Assessment and Results Policy* provides that recommended adjustments may be refused in this manner, however in order to avoid direct or indirect disability discrimination, the onus is on the university to make known the particular unreasonableness of the accommodation or adjustment. Consequently, it is reasonable to expect that the decision passed back to the student is transparent - appropriately referencing those inherent requirements or problems with academic integrity posed by making the requested adjustment.

### **Recommendation**

Outcome notices to students regarding their special consideration or equitable adjustments pursuant to Impact Statements should be drafted to clearly indicate the specific basis on which the requested adjustment is deemed unreasonable.

### ***When a Penalty is not a Penalty - New Academic Misconduct Regulations***

We have now seen the first outcomes from faculty discipline committees who are implementing the new Academic Misconduct Regulations and Academic Integrity Policy. We are encouraged by the substantive outcomes so far, all of which evidence engagement with the Regulation's greater emphasis on educative responses to first time issues, and the increased range of penalties which provide an opportunity to issue more proportionate penalties. However procedurally there may need to be a few tweaks.

For example, we were pleased to see a decision effectively diverting a formal plagiarism hearing to an educative response. The outcome notice indicated the original formal allegation of misconduct had been dismissed, and the Committee had determined 'the meeting be treated as educative' but then went on to issue a directive that the student revise and submit the assessment. The student was confused because it remained unclear how an allegation could be dismissed, yet a requirement to resubmit was possible.

## Recommendation

For this reason we recommend that, where a diversion such as this occurs, the outcome notice should make express that a resubmission of the assessment is not a penalty, but a directive under s. 5.26 of the *Academic Integrity Policy* and set out the relevant consequence of failing to do as requested.

### ***The Rise and Rise of Advocacy Casework Demand - Increase in case load over time***

The Service continues to experience exponential growth in demand. This time last year, the Quarterly report featured a report on the increase in advocacy casework, driven largely by an increase in referrals for assistance with routine University administrative task which were not advocacy in nature (see above).

2015		2016		Increase
January	160	January	181	13%
February	101	February	148	47%
March	95	March	93	-2%
April	61	April	81	33%
May	75	May	80	7%
June	113	June	100	-12%
July	289	July	414	43%
August	130	August	158	22%
September	103	September	111	8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1127</b>		<b>1366</b>	<b>21%</b>

### ***Students presenting over time***

The increase 2013 - 2014 was 10% and in 2014 – 2015 it was 15%. Clearly the demand on the Service has continued to grow this year, with the months of February and July peaking with 47% and 43% increases respectively in service users making contact for assistance, with an increase of demand of 21% for the year 2015 to 2016.

### ***Good News Story***

After unsuccessful applications for Special Consideration in December 2014, a student who sought assistance from the Service subsequently had their enrolment terminated by a Course Unsatisfactory Progress Committee (CUPC). The CUPC cited a 'clear history of failures with no clear strategies on how to improve academic performance' as its reason for its determination. The student had been diagnosed as suffering from schizophrenia, and was receiving ongoing assistance and support from the Disability Liaison Unit, as it was then known, to manage their studies. After effectively challenging the special consideration issue in an internal review, and passing the subsequent special assessment, the student successfully appealed the termination of their enrolment. Since this time the student has achieved honours grades over the last two semesters, and is due to complete their degree this year. Their final project has also received attention from University marketing as an outstanding project worthy of media attention. Kudos!

## **Advocacy Service Statistics**

### ***Comparative data – July - September 2016***

This quarter 597 students were provided a service resulting in 1364 contacts. In the same quarter last year, the service saw 410 students which resulted in 1197 contacts with the service. A large volume of these matters concerned assessment and course unsatisfactory progress as will be seen below.

The Advocacy website received almost 8000 page views this quarter. More than 1700 of these were on the CUPC page. Other popular pages included information on special consideration and assessment disputes.

### ***Distribution by primary issue:***

The primary issue is generally identified as the university process to which the student's main concern or problem relates. Data is classified in this way because it provides a standardised and more meaningful breakdown which may be useful for tracking policy trends amongst other things.

**July - September 2016**

All Students			Graduate Coursework students			RHD students		
Course Unsatisfactory Progress Committee	315	52.76%	Course Unsatisfactory Progress Committee	79	46.20%	Progress - HDR	11	36.67%
Special Consideration	94	15.75%	Special Consideration	32	18.71%	Supervision Problems	7	23.33%
Assessment Dispute	51	8.54%	Assessment Dispute	17	9.94%	Other	3	10.00%
Academic Misconduct - Plagiarism	24	4.02%	Academic Misconduct - Plagiarism	8	4.68%	Student Admin - Enrolment problems	2	6.67%
Student Admin - Enrolment problems	17	2.85%	Student Admin - Enrolment problems	7	4.09%	Course Unsatisfactory Progress Committee	2	6.67%
Progress - HDR	11	1.84%	Vocational Placement Problems	5	2.92%	Academic Misconduct - Plagiarism	2	6.67%
Academic Misconduct - Collusion	10	1.68%	Academic Misconduct - Falsified docs	5	2.92%	Student complaint about uni staff	1	3.33%
Other	10	1.68%	Student complaint about uni staff	4	2.34%	General Misconduct	1	3.33%
Student complaint about uni staff	9	1.51%	Equitable Accommodation (SEAP)	3	1.75%	Assessment Dispute	1	3.33%
Supervision Problems	8	1.34%	Advance Standing Credit/RPL	2	1.17%			
Academic Misconduct - Falsified docs	6	1.01%	Other	2	1.17%			
Not Specified	6	1.01%	Student Admin - Remission of Fees	2	1.17%			
Admission - Selection Appeal	6	1.01%	Student Admin - Exchange	1	0.58%			
Equitable Accommodation (SEAP)	5	0.84%	Course structure/changes	1	0.58%			
Vocational Placement Problems	5	0.84%	Student Admin - Graduation	1	0.58%			
Course structure/changes	4	0.67%	Supervision Problems	1	0.58%			
Advance Standing Credit/RPL	3	0.50%	Research Ethics	1	0.58%			
General Misconduct	3	0.50%						
Discrimination	2	0.34%						
Student Admin - Graduation	2	0.34%						
Student Admin - Remission of Fees	2	0.34%						
Bullying	1	0.17%						
Research Ethics	1	0.17%						
Student Admin - Exchange	1	0.17%						
Incorrect Advice	1	0.17%						

**July - September 2015**

All Students			Graduate Coursework students			RHD students		
Course Unsatisfactory Progress	294	69.67%	Course Unsatisfactory Progress	81	62.79%	Progress - HDR	6	35.29%
Special Consideration	38	9.00%	Assessment Dispute	16	12.40%	Supervision Problems	5	29.41%
Assessment Dispute	29	6.87%	Special Consideration	11	8.53%	Vocational Placement Problems	1	5.88%
Academic Misconduct - Plagiarism	11	2.61%	Academic Misconduct - Plagiarism	7	5.43%	Student Admin - Enrolment problems	1	5.88%
Supervision Problems	6	1.42%	Student complaint about uni staff	3	2.33%	Other	1	5.88%
Progress - HDR	6	1.42%	Other	3	2.33%	General Misconduct	1	5.88%
Other	6	1.42%	Admission - Selection Appeal	2	1.55%	Admission - Selection Appeal	1	5.88%
Admission - Selection Appeal	6	1.42%	Vocational Placement Problems	1	0.78%	Academic Misconduct - Plagiarism	1	5.88%
Student complaint about uni staff	4	0.95%	Supervision Problems	1	0.78%			
Not Specified	4	0.95%	Course structure/changes	1	0.78%			
Student Admin - Enrolment problems	3	0.71%	Advance Standing Credit/RPL	1	0.78%			
Academic Misconduct - Exam	3	0.71%	Academic Misconduct - Exam	1	0.78%			
Advance Standing Credit/RPL	3	0.71%	Not Specified	1	0.78%			
Course structure/changes	2	0.47%						
General Misconduct	2	0.47%						
Vocational Placement Problems	2	0.47%						
Equitable Accommodation (SEAP)	2	0.47%						
Incorrect Advice	1	0.24%						

**Distribution by graduate/undergraduate status**

July - September 2016

Graduate	214	35.85%
Undergraduate	383	64.15%

July - September 2015

Graduate	153	37.32%
Undergraduate	257	62.68%

**Distribution by International/Domestic Status**

July - September 2016

Domestic	393	65.83%
International	204	34.17%

July - September 2015

Domestic	269	65.61%
International	141	34.39%

**Distribution of cases over all by Faculty/School – July - September 2015**

In order to make the following data more meaningful the relative weighting of faculties by enrolment has been included. Currently this is based on load data correct at April 2015. This allows a more accurate comparison of how faculties are represented by issues presenting to the service. It is also relevant to note that it is not possible to draw from this data why faculties may be over or under represented. For example, high representation may reflect an active referral policy within that faculty or it may disclose certain procedural issues.

	Number of cases and as a proportion of all cases.		Enrolments in the faculty as a proportion of students enrolled at university	Indication of relative representation in Advocacy casework
Faculty of Science	125	31.57%	12.62%	>>>
Faculty of Business and Economics	24	6.06%	0.41%	>>>
Melbourne School of Engineering	32	8.08%	4.75%	>>
Faculty of Arts	59	14.90%	14.71%	==
Melbourne Graduate School of Education	39	9.85%	9.37%	==
Faculty of MDHS	45	11.36%	15.63%	<
Melbourne School of Design (and ABP)	20	5.05%	6.53%	<
Melbourne Business School (MBS)	9	2.27%	5.41%	<<
Law School	6	1.52%	3.90%	<<
VCA & Music	2	0.51%	6.29%	<<<
Faculty of Veterinary and Agricultural Sciences	25	6.31%	20.39%	<<<
Melbourne Conservatorium of Music (MCM)	4	1.01%	-	

## Commentary

The proportion of graduate to undergraduate students was 35.85% to 64.15% (compared with 37.24% to 62.76% for the same period last year).

This quarter there were 65.83% domestic and 34.17% international students presenting to the service, this compares closely with the same quarter last year where the breakdown was 65.61% domestic students to 34.39% and it is almost exactly aligns with the proportion of domestic to international students enrolled at the University (34.15%).

The primary presenting issue this quarter was course unsatisfactory progress (CUPC). Our data includes all processes related to CUPC, from briefing students at risk to Academic Board Appeals. Students from the Faculty of Science represented a quarter of all those presenting for assistance with Course Unsatisfactory Progress. This was followed by students from the Faculties of Business and Economics and Engineering. Special Consideration and Assessment disputes were the next most common issues. Special Consideration issues were concentrated in Science, Arts, Engineering and Business and Economics. As usual, the report concentrates on the top four issues for the quarter; however, further breakdowns against other primary issues and against various demographics are available on request.

Overall, presenting students came from 12 schools and faculties. Science was the most frequently represented faculty followed by the faculties of Arts and MDHS respectively.

### ***Course Unsatisfactory Progress - By Faculty/School***

Faculty of Science	80	25.40%
Faculty of Business and Economics	53	16.83%
Not Listed	41	13.02%
Engineering	38	12.06%
Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning	26	8.25%
Melbourne Graduate School of Education	23	7.30%
Faculty of Arts	23	7.30%
Faculty of MDHS	15	4.76%
Melbourne Business School (MBS)	6	1.90%
Faculty of Veterinary and Agricultural Sciences	5	1.59%
Law School	3	0.95%
VCA & Music	2	0.63%

### ***Course Unsatisfactory Progress – by Graduate/Undergraduate***

Undergraduate	233	73.97%
Graduate	82	26.03%

### ***Course Unsatisfactory Progress – by International/Domestic***

Domestic	188	59.68%
International	127	40.32%



**Special Consideration - By Faculty/School**

Faculty of Science	20	21.28%
Faculty of Arts	18	19.15%
Not Listed	17	18.09%
Melbourne School of Engineering	12	12.77%
Faculty of Business and Economics	8	8.51%
Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning	6	6.38%
Faculty of MDHS	5	5.32%
Medicine, Dentistry & Health Sciences	4	4.26%
Melbourne Business School (MBS)	3	3.19%
Faculty of Veterinary and Agricultural Sciences	1	1.06%
Melbourne Graduate School of Education	1	1.06%

**Special Consideration – by Graduate/Undergraduate**

Undergraduate	62	65.96%
Graduate	32	34.04%

**Special Consideration – by International/Domestic**

Domestic	70	74.47%
International	24	25.53%

**Assessment Disputes - By Faculty/School**

Faculty of Science	12	23.53%
Melbourne School of Engineering	8	15.69%
Melbourne School of Design (HDCW & HDR)	6	11.76%
Faculty of Arts	5	9.80%
Faculty of Business and Economics	4	7.84%
Melbourne Graduate School of Education	3	5.88%
Faculty of Veterinary and Agricultural Sciences	3	5.88%
Law School	3	5.88%
Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning	2	3.92%
VCA & Music	2	3.92%
Faculty of MDHS	2	3.92%

**Assessment Disputes – by Graduate/Undergraduate**

Graduate	30	58.82%
Undergraduate	21	41.18%

**Assessment Disputes – by International/Domestic**

Domestic	37	72.55%
International	14	27.45%

**Academic Misconduct – Plagiarism - By Faculty/School**

Faculty of Arts	5	20.83%
Melbourne School of Engineering	4	16.67%
Melbourne Graduate School of Education	4	16.67%
Faculty of Business and Economics	3	12.50%
Law School	2	8.33%
Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning	2	8.33%
Faculty of Science	2	8.33%

**Academic Misconduct - Plagiarism – by Graduate/Undergraduate**

Graduate	14	58.33%
Undergraduate	10	41.67%

**Academic Misconduct - Plagiarism – by International/Domestic**

Domestic	14	58.33%
International	10	41.67%

**Liaisons and involvement with the University Community**

The service is always keen for opportunities to speak to staff at the University to demystify our role and explain the services we provide and how we can work together to further student interests.

Staff in the Advocacy Service liaised with the University Community in the following ways over the period:

13-Sep-16	Meet and greet with CAPs team. A chance to catch up and information share on issues we have in common and discuss ways of working together to support particularly vulnerable students.	CAPS – Cardigan St
28-Sep-16	Meeting with Safer Communities Programme	1888 building East Wing

The next Advocacy Service report will cover the quarter October to December 2016 and will be available in January 2017.

Phoebe Churches  
**Manager, Advocacy & Legal**  
**October 2016**

**Appendix 1 - Student Union Advocacy Service User Survey 2016**

Encl.../

# Advocacy Service User Survey 2016

## 1. Background

The Advocacy Service Agreement with the University specifies at Schedule 1 that the Service is required to demonstrate by way of independently verifiable annual survey of users that it has delivered the required services to appropriate standard. Services are to be graded on a 5 point scale and the operator must achieve an aggregate score of 3.5, and not less than 3 for any specific question.

The survey is distributed as an online survey to students who have had contact with the service over a 12 month period culminating in the commencement of the survey. Students indicate on their contact form when they use the advocacy service whether they are happy to be contacted for this purpose. Only those students who have opted in in this way are invited to complete the survey.

As a result of relatively low return rates over the last few years, this year the Service offered the chance to win one of four \$50 Officeworks vouchers or one of 5 double student movie passes for completing the survey.

## 2. Executive Summary

The Survey was open for 4 weeks between 26<sup>th</sup> August and 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2016. There were 54 responses received of 168 invitations – a 32% return rate - which is significantly above the usual rate of around 25% in previous years.

Firstly it must be noted that the survey demonstrates the service has exceeded the benchmarks specified in the Service Agreement. The overall aggregate score was 4.57 and the lowest score for a specific question was 4.13.

23% of respondents had contact with Alanna Smith, 15% and 14% with Paul Hornsby and Donna Markwell respectively and 8% of respondents had contact with our newest staff member, Michelle Almiron who commenced in February this year; indicating a good representative spread of feedback on the experience of each of the senior advocates.

Just over 53% of respondents had had face to face contact with a staff member and a significant 21% had had contact via email or via our web form. 19% of respondents had made contact by all three available methods: face to face, on the phone and via email. This breakdown continues to represent our efforts to triage our contact with students most efficiently, and provide advice primarily via email for the very high proportion of students who want feedback on their written submissions for the course unsatisfactory progress committee.

Overall satisfaction with the service was at 92% in this survey which is significantly higher than the 2015 and 2014 survey averages (82% and 80% respectively).

The lowest aggregate score was in response to the question 'I found information on the Advocacy Service website useful'. Significantly however, the agreement rate for this question was high at 92%. The lower aggregate score was due to just two respondents strongly disagreeing that the website information was useful.

Given the satisfaction with the website information was 90% in 2014 and dipped to 73% in 2015; we feel confident that the significant work completed over 2015 and the first half of 2016 to improve our communication strategy has improved the website's efficacy and accessibility.

The trend of direct referrals from the University overtaking self-referral from the website has continued. This is followed by word of mouth and, decreasingly, by other forms of marketing such as brochures and posters.

With respect to the demographics of the respondents, the balance between graduate and undergraduate students has levelled out at 60% to 40% which is consistent across the last four years. In 2014 20% of respondents were from other campuses, including Burnley and Southbank. This year the majority (94%) of respondents were Parkville based. Almost two thirds of respondents were domestic students.

### **3. Commentary**

One area which has been addressed since it arose as an issue in a number of successive surveys, has been students' erroneous expectation that Advocates play an adversarial representative role in hearings. This was previously evidenced by the relatively high dissatisfaction level and lower aggregate score for the statement 'the advocate made persuasive arguments in meetings or hearings on my behalf'. Some respondents commented that they felt the advocate could have been more vigorous and adversarial in hearings. Several years ago we developed the Service Charter in an attempt to foster more realistic expectations of the Advocates' role. The latest results suggest the Service has finally achieved cut through in communicating to service users the empowerment model upon which the service is predicated, and the fact that the service does not exercise coercive power over university processes. It is also likely that this improvement reflects the increasing skill of advocates as the team becomes more experienced.

Another area which requires attention is our service users' experience of the Advocacy website. In the last few years considerable time and effort has gone towards providing practical plain English information regarding the key issues affecting students in this space. This includes links to critical University information as well as downloadable templates to assist students to draft submissions in a clear and coherent format. Considerable time also goes into monitoring the policy environment - which has been in constant flux over the last few years - and ensuring the information on the website remains accurate. We will continue to work on the information architecture and user experience of the website to improve its accessibility.

The qualitative responses indicate the respondents shared an overwhelmingly positive interaction with the service. As previously, we have opted to include these responses in full in **Appendix A** rather than thematically, as many respondents took the time to provide considerable detail. It is also significant that across the whole survey no more than two respondents have indicated disagreement or dissatisfaction. On the qualitative feedback it appears that those service users were dissatisfied because, in one situation the staff member was on leave when they contacted (however the respondent would have been directed to the main service contact for urgent assistance), and for the other the student felt the advocate should have had more coercive power. There is always room for improvement and we are ever mindful that we must deal patiently and sensitively with people who are often vulnerable and highly stressed by their situation. In this context we will continue to strive to provide consistently excellent service to our service users.

## FINDINGS - OUR STAFF

<b>1. Which staff of the Advocacy service have you dealt with?</b>		
Alanna Smith	15	<b>23%</b>
Phoebe Churches	12	<b>18%</b>
Paul Hornsby	10	<b>15%</b>
Donna Markwell	9	<b>14%</b>
Can't remember	7	<b>11%</b>
Nadia Di Battista	7	<b>11%</b>
Michelle Almiron (from February 2016)	5	<b>8%</b>

\*Respondents could choose more than one staff member.

<b>2. Please write briefly the issue for which you sought assistance: Summary*</b>		
CUPC	17	<b>31%</b>
academic misconduct hearing	13	<b>24%</b>
Special consideration/Equitable adjustments	12	<b>22%</b>
Enrolment problem	3	<b>6%</b>
Supervision	3	<b>6%</b>
Complaint/Grievance	2	<b>4%</b>
Assessment dispute	2	<b>4%</b>
Advanced standing/credit	1	<b>2%</b>
Other administrative	1	<b>2%</b>

\*Student's full comments in Appendix A

<b>3. What was your main method of consultation with the advocate?</b>		
Face-to-face meetings	33	<b>53%</b>
E-mail/Webform	13	<b>21%</b>
All of the Above	12	<b>19%</b>
Telephone calls	4	<b>6%</b>

## THE ADVOCACY SERVICE

### 4. Based on your experience dealing with our advocate(s), please tell us your agreement with the statements below:

Answer Options	Strongly disagree		Neutral		Strongly agree	N/A	Aggregate	Agreement % 2016 / 15 / 14		
Assistance was provided in a reasonable time once I had met with an advocate.	0	1	2	11	34	6	<b>4.62</b>	<b>94</b>	88	88
The advocate was present at the designated time of our appointments.	0	0	1	7	38	8	<b>4.80</b>	<b>98</b>	89	91
The advocate clearly described university processes relating to my issue	0	0	1	15	37	1	<b>4.65</b>	<b>98</b>	91	94
The advocate took my wishes into account and guided me on the best strategy to achieve my desired outcome.	0	0	2	9	41	2	<b>4.75</b>	<b>96</b>	90	86
The advocate followed through with what s/he said they would do to assist.	0	1	2	8	41	2	<b>4.72</b>	<b>94</b>	90	79
I was kept informed of any action the advocate took in relation to my circumstance.	0	0	4	8	26	16	<b>4.57</b>	<b>89</b>	83	73
The advocate made or helped make persuasive written submissions in relation to my circumstance.	0	0	3	6	32	14	<b>4.70</b>	<b>93</b>	87	76
The advocate made persuasive arguments in meetings or hearings on my behalf.	0	1	3	5	20	25	<b>4.51</b>	<b>86</b>	53	67
Outcome of my case was clearly explained by the advocate.	0	2	1	8	22	21	<b>4.51</b>	<b>91</b>	74	72
The advocate made appropriate referrals to other service providers.	0	1	5	6	11	31	<b>4.17</b>	<b>74</b>	69	72
I am satisfied overall with the assistance given by the advocate.	0	2	0	9	43	0	<b>4.72</b>	<b>96</b>	88	81

<b>1. How did you first find out about the Advocacy Service?</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Referral from a University Student Service / Stop 1	<b>33%</b>	20
Website	<b>23%</b>	14
Referral from academic staff	<b>15%</b>	9
Referral from a University Student Service	<b>8%</b>	5
Referral from another Student Union department	<b>7%</b>	4
Other	<b>5%</b>	3
Referral from someone who has used the service	<b>5%</b>	3
Advertisement, including posters	<b>3%</b>	2

\*Respondents could choose more than one.

<b>2. Based on your experience dealing with our advocate(s), please tell us your agreement with the statements below:</b>										
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>		<b>Neither</b>		<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>Aggregate</b>	<b>Agreement %</b>		
								<b>2016 / 15 / 14</b>		
The Advocacy Service staff were helpful when I made my initial enquiry.	0	2	1	11	29	11	4.55	93	90	90
I found information on the Advocacy Service website useful.	2	0	1	22	12	17	4.13	92	79	73

## A LITTLE BIT ABOUT YOURSELF

1. Please indicate the type of degree you were undertaking when the above issue occurred:		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Undergraduate	39%	21
Graduate coursework	39%	21
PhD	17%	9
Graduate research	6%	3

2. Which campus were you mostly studying in when the above issue occurred?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Parkville	94%	51
Burnley	4%	2
Other	2%	1

2015: Parkville 100% | 2014: Parkville 98% | Burnley: 2%

3. Were you enrolled as an international student when the above issue occurred?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	37%	20
No	63%	34

2015: International 24% | Domestic: 76% 2014: International 36% | Domestic: 64%



## Appendix A

### Please write briefly the issue for which you sought assistance:

- academic misconduct hearing
- I was being misunderstood by the examiner that I brought unauthorized materials into my final exam for a subject last year.
- academic misconduct hearing at the teaching school
- Academic misconduct hearing, heard twice due to problems with the initial that had to be taken up with ombudsman
- Academic misconduct hearings
- Allegation of Academic misconduct
- Advanced Standing Problems
- appeal against termination
- Assessment dispute
- Assistance with a Late Withdrawal Application
- Assisted with lodging formal grievances
- complaint
- Academic Progress Review, CUPCs and appeals, one grievance letter.
- Conflict with PhD supervisors and early termination of studentship
- Course Unsatisfactory Progress Committee
- CUP Committee Meeting.
- CUPC
- CUPC meeting hearing.
- Disability help
- Extension of Special Consideration
- For an updated Confirmation of Enrolment as my course was yet not complete.
- For preparation of CUPC meeting.
- General misconduct hearing and appeal
- got a recommendation for Academic misconduct and was at my academic misconduct hearing
- I have some requirements for exams and in-class assessments due to my vision impairment and these were not met for my Japanese 3 exam last semester so I sought help about how to proceed and if I could have my exam recalculated due to my disadvantage.
- I was actually in the wrong place. I wanted special consideration for a long time so I had to go to disabilities but Donna was incredibly helpful in telling me everything I needed to know
- I was admitted to emergency (my heart rate would go up) twice last year because my supervisor would start yelling at me when I excelled in my work.
- I was appeal to the Academic Board under the Academic Progress Policy. I am appealing against the decision of a Course Unsatisfactory Progress Committee to limit my workload to 37.5 points in semester 2 2016.
- I was experiencing issues enrolling in subjects, and had been told I would be unable to enrol due to missing an enrolment lapse date I had not been told of.
- Late withdrawal
- Late withdrawal denied
- Missing payment from financial services
- My special consideration was rejected twice after sending another review but phoebe churches had helped me proficiently that I now have a chance to retake the paper and not to fail the subject.
- Notice of unsatisfactory progress
- Personal issues, poor academic performance
- PhD supervisor nightmare
- preparation of cupc meeting
- Special consideration
- Special consideration appeal
- Special consideration application. I received help however I did not have formal appointments.
- Special consideration outcome appeal to academic board
- Supervisor misconduct.
- taking a leave
- The grounds for appeal, in accordance with section 13.1.9(2) of Statute 13.1 are that: the penalty imposed under section 13.1.8 was manifestly excessive, inappropriate or not available in the circumstances.
- Thesis mark awardment (sic)
- Unsatisfactory progress committee

**Please tell us the reason why you are satisfied/not satisfied with the assistance you received:**

- Great help. Couldn't have done it without you!
- Nadia is very nice. After the appointment, she also replied my emails and also gave me a call when I had further questions. What she suggested me to do was for my best outcome. And the outcome was exactly as she predicted.
- Phoebe is fantastic. So calm and very intelligent. I am so grateful.
- I totally satisfy for the help that I get from Madam Alanna Smith.
- She is very helpful and cheerful. She helps me a lot in preparation of my appeal.
- Donna was very considerate and understanding and helped explain the possible outcomes of my situation very clearly and succinctly. She was reachable if I had any concerns about submitting my application and was very gracious when I asked her to look over what I had written. I was very satisfied and thankful in regards to the effort she put in, that then yielded the result we were after.
- They gave me solid advice about my issue.
- The advocate was very helpful throughout the whole process. The advocate also provided a lot of moral support and was present for the hearing.
- Nadia was really supportive. She provided me with lots of effective suggestions and led me through step by step how to deal with the issue. She also provided me with sufficient information and followed up my every result/outcome.
- While the overall face-to-face meeting was satisfactory, I had been informed by Stop1 that there would be a staff member from Advocacy Services available the day of my CUP Committee meeting, who I could talk to before my meeting. However, on arrival, there was no one there, which was highly disappointing.
- The advocate fully understood my situation through clarifying the reason why I made mistakes. Then described me all the cases why university considers students' work are plagiarised and all possible outcome from academic hearing.
- I appreciated with her all support and her participation at my hearing.
- I can take the paper that I couldn't take previously. So happy!
- So satisfied coz she put me on the right way.
- The service that I received was outstanding. I can't fault it in any way. The advocates were extremely supportive and provided accurate information about what I could expect in relation to my issue.
- Mainly because they were able to reassure me that there was some hope in my predicament.
- Phoebe was very helpful and I found that she aided me in diminishing my anxieties related to my case significantly. She was also very helpful in aiding me to take the next steps in order to proceed with my case and was very timely in her help and guidance. I found the experience of getting help from her extremely helpful.
- I was very satisfied by the assistance, as the issue was sorted out quickly after the advocate had contacted the admin staff, and they were able to gain a response that I had not been successful in gaining.
- Donna was incredibly helpful and lovely and was perfect in dealing with me in my fragile state. She gave me plenty of support and helped me immensely. She pointed me on the right track and didn't make me feel stupid for needing help
- Nadia was so nice and she helped me a lot in preparation and discussing the possible outcomes of the CUPC meeting.
- She was friendly, made me feel calm about the situation through giving me knowledge and guidance.
- Alanna was very helpful, sympathetic and helped me through the process to get the outcome I wanted.
- I think the help was very helpful and pertinent to my situation.
- I felt that she did not herself fully informed of my situation before she provided advice, although her advice was effective in terms of the outcome it helped me to achieve.
- Donna's communications were consistently timely, professional and clear. Her advice was sound and I felt that she was very supportive during a difficult and protracted dispute with the University.
- She told me what the procedure would be so I was aware of what was about to happen.
- Both Phoebe and Paul were professional, knowledgeable and supportive. They did everything they could to assist me in the appeals process.
- She was very kind and helpful. Made me feel comfortable and confident. Lovely person.
- They were very courteous and professional, I do not fault them at all for the outcome.
- I wasn't aware of how to seek assistance from advocacy services so I dropped in during the Semester 1 exam period where I was assisted by Nadia and Donna. I was having trouble with medical issues during the exam period and I didn't know how to apply for special consideration or retrieve the health report that was filled out about me by a medic during one of my exams, but Nadia and Donna promptly contacted the relevant person (unfortunately I don't remember who this was) who emailed me a photo of my health report which was an essential component of my special consideration application. The advocates I spoke to were very kind and compassionate and explained university processes that were relevant to my situation. Their help was invaluable, and with their assistance, my application was approved. I am very satisfied with the assistance I received.
- Alanna was professional and prompt in dealing with the situation at hand. Through every step of the process she kept me informed and answered any concerns I had.

- The advocate was helpful in providing advice but I felt that given the ongoing issues I've had with the university it is perhaps time to take the issue directly to them rather than be told I just need to 'jump through their hoops better' (not a direct quote).
- The advocate clearly explained the process of taking my issue further to me and assisted me in taking the next step in a timely manner.
- It took me some time to cut through and get communicated the total picture of what I was facing. There was some shuffling back and forth while I was left feeling somewhat helpless. Ultimately though this service was incredibly patient with my situation as it extended and went through repetitive and novel twists that were fantastically complicated and hard to follow so definite kudos to the team!
- Was very helpful and provided exactly the info I needed. Made a stressful situation much easier.
- I am totally satisfied as the decision of Appeal Board was in my favour and the University has provided me with new CoE.
- My main advocate was Michelle, and Donna also put in a lot of time to help me. They were professional, courteous, and incredibly supportive through this difficult time. I can't thank them enough. They took time to understand my point of view, my concerns, and adapted seamlessly to this difficult case.
- I think that Michelle has done as much as she is able to do at this point in time, and her knowledge and support has been invaluable. The matter is yet to be resolved, but I'm hopeful it will be soon.
- Answered all my questions
- Good communication she also helped me to stay calm. Her presence during my hearing was really helpful.
- Unfortunately, she was on leaves and did not answer my questions and concern
- I am satisfied that my email had been replied promptly by the advisor which helps lessen my mental stress or burden that time.

**If you have any general comments about or suggestions for the advocate, please write them here:**

- Such a worthwhile service.
- Donna was wonderful to talk to, gave great advice and was always available either by telephone or email if I needed her. She made a stressful and frustrating experience much less so and should be commended and congratulated on her efforts and the positive results they yielded.
- Keep up the good work. Thanks!
- She was really great and I wouldn't be able to take the paper if it wasn't for her.
- I trust that your valuable service will continue as otherwise it would be devastating for students without such professional support!!
- Donna is incredible I'm so much in her debt and I can't thank her enough.
- I know that their promotion campaigns are good but somehow they can have a larger audience.
- Give students more time to inform advocates of their case/long appointment times, and don't rush through the appointment just because advocates are busy or there are other cases to handle.
- Honest advice.
- Thank you so much for all your understanding, support and assistance throughout this difficult process. I very much appreciate all the help and time you provided me!
- Thanks so much for your help.
- I know you are trained to listen but sometimes problems seem to fall in easy categories and one is tempted to get going as if sure of the normal steps taken in various circumstances. It is important to be open to the possibility of catching nuance, shades of grey, something that may be deeper, more challenging elusive but detecting those differences can be decisive in helping creating a textured, fuller understanding of and for a client and a defense that is a cut above. It is possibly easier to be the tiniest bit dismissive even against a general backdrop of extremely good service than to listen with that extra, extra attention that the task will sometimes demand. Thanks a million for getting there with me. You are my heroes. Keep up the fantastic work!
- My deepest thanks.
- It's all good
- If you have any general comments about or suggestions for the Advocacy Service, please write them here:
- You are all so passionate and caring! Thank you to the whole student advocacy team for all the help and support!
- If there's any way to improve the face to face meeting time backlog, that would be very helpful. Also there should be more help applying to the state ombudsman.
- I am thankful to UMSU Advocacy services for their guidance and assistance. I am sure their services help many students.
- I believe a greater level of power to support students in cases of supervisor misconduct is needed. In addition, increased funding to hire more staff would allow for a more timely response to inquiries. I believe Michelle responded as quickly as possible, but was aware that the staff were incredibly busy.