



ADVOCACY

Service Report September - December 2021



Introduction

Between 2012 and 2017 the Advocacy Service was funded by the University subject to a service contract. As part of the contractual reporting requirements, the Service produced a quarterly report to the University's Advocacy Service Reference Group (ASRG). Subsequent to the discontinuation of the separate Advocacy service contract with the University, after funding for the service was subsumed into the UMSU whole of organisation funding under the 2017 SSAF funding model, the ASRG was formally disbanded on 17 April 2018 at its final meeting.

Nevertheless, although the Service Report was originally commissioned by the ASRG as an accountability measure, it has also served to ventilate student experiences of processes within the relevant parts of the University. Over time, the circulation of the Report grew to encompass a good cross section of the University Community, establishing strong communication channels for feedback and issues management between relevant stakeholders. We hope to continue to expand and consolidate these channels and invite interested University staff to contact the Service directly to collaborate on responses to the issues identified in the Report.

Data and 'Anecdotal'

The data presented in this report is drawn from the statistics recorded in the Advocacy Service Case management database. It is not drawn from, nor is it correlated with university collected service data, to which we have no access. For this reason, it is important to interpret the data and analysis as pertaining solely to activities of the Advocacy Service. The Report statistics cannot be extrapolated to provide commentary on the performance of Faculties or Schools, unless specifically indicated in the commentary.

The 'Trends and Issues' identified in the report are based on both service statistics, and anecdotal observations and case studies. They are provided as insights into the student experience of university processes, or as potential indicators of systemic problems with administrative decision making and procedural fairness. These issues are not intended to reflect the totality of student experience, but rather those areas where the University needs to address potentially serious issues and risks.

The Service can generate drill down or other statistics on its activities, where these may be of interest to the University community, however due to relatively few resources, such requests need to be made with due notice.

Trends and Issues

The trend back towards more "normal" service continued during this period, and as a result it was the more common casework matters such as special consideration, course academic progress, assessment disputes, and academic misconduct allegations which were predominant.

In terms of the trends and issues which arose during this time, unfortunately the trend of poor practice in managing academic misconduct processes has continued. At the risk of sounding like a broken record, the problems that we regularly encounter ultimately lead back to a lack of training and resourcing for the staff taking carriage of these processes.

When the process for investigating potential breaches of academic integrity lacks integrity

Sections 5.15-5.16 of the Student Academic Integrity Policy outline the methods that academic staff may employ to identify potential breaches of academic integrity, and what students may be asked to do to assist with that process. This can include a requirement to discuss or explain components of their assessment tasks, but not a de facto misconduct hearing. Students have the same right not to self-incriminate as anyone in such processes, and the University bears the burden of proof to evidence allegations of wrongdoing. However, during the period covered by this report, we saw a rather concerning interpretation of these policy provisions by some academic staff in the Faculty of Science.

The Service was contacted by a number of students who had received formal allegations of misconduct, where an important piece of evidence was an email exchange with the Subject Coordinator from the time the potential breach was discovered. The email to the students alerted them to an extremely high level of similarity between their final exam paper and that of several websites, went on to describe what can potentially be considered academic misconduct, before effectively trying to persuade them into confessing wrongdoing with the question "Would you be able to explain the reason for your actions?" I think most would agree that it is not a trivial question of semantics to point out that "your actions" connotes something more sinister than "can you explain how you came to have such similar phrasing"?

Naturally, many panicked students replied immediately to the email to offer the best explanation they could in the circumstances (it also didn't help that the email from the coordinator concluded with the warning that the student must reply by COB the very next day or else "we will have to pursue the case without your input.")

Rather than a legitimate and fair process for identifying potential breaches of academic misconduct, this interpretation of sections 5.15-5.16 effectively constituted a 'fishing expedition' to elicit potentially incriminating information from students. We would regard this as a fishing expedition not least given the initial assessment of the work suggested there was already sufficient evidence to raise a formal investigation. Given the email correspondence was included as evidence

with the allegation, the students' right to a fair hearing was significantly compromised on multiple fronts: the email presumed guilt; the students were prompted to provide an explanation when they were not fully informed of the case to be met; and the Misconduct Committee's capacity for impartiality was significantly undermined.

Recommendation:

Students are rightly expected to uphold the proper standards of academic integrity in principle and practice, in all the work they do. However, when a possible breach of misconduct has occurred, the University has just as much of a responsibility to ensure proper process is followed.

As the University states on its website:

Ensuring academic integrity is vital to protecting the standards and esteem of The University of Melbourne's degrees. Every student has an interest in protecting and supporting the good reputation of the University. Ethical practice in scholarly work and professional behaviour are recognised as important graduate attributes, and are an essential criterion of workplace professionalism. Academic integrity goes beyond the policing of university assessment and is part of a graduate's formation as a professional, underpinning their behaviour in the workplace, and reflecting on their personal honesty and integrity in all aspects of life.

This is a two-way street; if the process for investigating potential breaches of misconduct fails to abide by the most fundamental principles of procedural fairness and natural justice, the University fails in its own obligation to protect the standards and esteem and good reputation and ethical practice and professional behaviour and workplace professionalism that it purports to hold so dearly.

As we have stated in numerous service reports, staff responsible for undertaking these processes need to be regularly trained, and resources need to be provided to ensure the University abides by its own policies.

Justice delayed is....justice delayed....and delayed...and delayed

This report covers the period of September to December 2021, but this particular case from beginning to end actually managed to span a full year between February 2021 to February 2022. It's quite a tale, so I hope you're comfortable.

Back in February 2021, we were contacted by a student who had received an academic misconduct allegation from the Faculty of Arts. It was alleged that the student had provided their assignment to another student to copy. Included with the allegation notice was a statement from the Faculty that described similarities between the two assignments, and a Turnitin report relating to the respondent's assignment only. The Turnitin report did not show the specific alleged similarities between the two assignments.

The student had already submitted a written response to the allegation prior to seeking advice from the Advocacy Service, so we assisted them with preparing for the imminent hearing. The student attended the hearing with the Academic Misconduct Committee, where they denied providing their assignment to the other student, but in a classic case of reversing the burden of proof ("the Uni doesn't have to prove you did anything wrong, you have to prove that you *didn't*") the Misconduct Committee determined that there was sufficient evidence to uphold the allegation, and imposed a penalty of zero for the assignment.

When the student sought our advice on an appeal, it became apparent that the allegation materials provided to them did not include a copy of the other student's assignment, even though it was clearly a critical piece of evidence, and in fact was referred to specifically in the Faculty report within the allegation, as well as by the Chair of the Misconduct Committee in the hearing.

Consequently, we advised that the student's appeal should be grounded on a procedural irregularity (as well as "new information") due to the fact that important evidence- which had clearly been crucial in firstly formalising the allegation, and then to the Misconduct Committee's deliberations- had been withheld from the student. In lodging their appeal, the student was seeking to have the previously withheld evidence provided to them, and the opportunity to respond to a new Faculty Misconduct Committee.

The Academic Secretary dismissed the appeal without a hearing, based on a misapprehension of the facts of the case which went to the heart of the decision to dismiss the appeal. Specifically, the Academic Secretary stated that "*I note that you were provided with a copy of the Turnitin Report (Attachment 3), which you provided with your appeal. The report identified the similarities in the work you submitted and your paper returned an overall 22% similarity with 14% matching another student's paper.*" This completely failed to recognise that the only substantial similarities that Turnitin had identified was what was included in the assignment cover sheet – which every student submitted with their assignment – and also the reference list at the end, which accounted for the 14% match to another student's paper.

Consequently, not only was the reasoning for dismissing the appeal factually incorrect it was also lacking in rigor and

failed to address the substantive basis for the appeal. Had the Academic Secretary reviewed the Turnitin report more thoroughly, they would have seen that it *did not show* the similarities that were the subject of the allegation, and that the lack of corroborating evidence provided had significantly compromised the student's capacity to meaningfully respond to the allegation.

After this disappointing and frustrating outcome, the student sought our advice on seeking a review from the Ombudsman Victoria. Additionally, during this time, due to their dissatisfaction at the way the Faculty and Academic Board processes had been handled and their conviction that they had done nothing wrong, the student was also continuing their own further investigations. Based on information obtained from Student IT and the Privacy Officer, they uncovered important new information which verified that the other student involved had actually gained access to their student account and downloaded their assignment without their knowledge.

Things took an interesting turn from here.

It was June 2021 by this stage, and as the appeal process was already exhausted, the student was in a difficult position in terms of how to present the significant new information they had acquired. Consequently, they wrote to the Subject Coordinator to inform them that they had obtained new evidence which may have impacted the outcome of the investigation, and asked if the Faculty might have means to revisit the matter in some way.

The Subject Coordinator passed the enquiry onto the Course Coordinator, who offered to forward the information to the Academic Misconduct Committee for review. Unsurprisingly, this was a dead end, as the Misconduct Committee would have considered the matter closed according to policy, and the matter could only have been remitted to the Committee via the Academic Board appeal process. The Course Coordinator subsequently advised the student that they had been seeking advice from the Arts Academic Integrity department about the process for "appeals", and instructed the student to appeal to the Arts Academic Integrity Office, explaining why their "appeal" had taken so long to submit and stating what they wanted to have overturned.

The student followed this advice, unsurprisingly only to receive a reply from the Arts Academic Integrity Office stating that they were unable to assist and that all appeal enquiries must go to the Academic Secretary. Understandably confused, the student continued to make enquiries at the Faculty level, and was then advised that "as the Academic Misconduct Committee was not willing to receive your appeal...you will now need to lodge a formal complaint". Yes, this is another Monty Python sketch, although hardly funny.

We were still assisting the student with their complaint to the Ombudsman at this point, and we were very concerned by the confusing and misleading advice that the Faculty was providing. It is worth noting that the Faculty staff involved were well intentioned and genuinely trying to assist, but the lack of a clear understanding about what could be done and the misleading advice about a review, and then an appeal to the Faculty, and then a formal complaint only caused further distress for the student.

We assisted the student to send a clarifying email and to request that the Faculty investigate further using whatever discretion was appropriate, as well as suggesting that the Faculty seek advice from the Academic Secretary, in their capacity as policy steward of the Student Academic Integrity Policy.

Unfortunately, this did not result in any clarification at all, and instead the Faculty found a new way to add further confusion to the mix. The student was advised that their request had now been sent to the Academic Board for reconsideration, and that the decision could take some time as they would have to wait for the next scheduled meeting. Needless to say that scheduled meetings of the full Academic Board are not the same as a properly constituted Student Appeal Panel convened to hear an individual appeal, so we were perplexed as to what the Faculty thought could be achieved by this referral to the Board.

Eventually, the response came back that the Board had apparently advised that "your request has exceeded the maximum timeframe to be considered. They have recognised the new and important information you have brought to your case and have requested that you go through the Student Complaints and Grievances process to reboot your appeal". In response to this, and with the permission of the student, we wrote to the Faculty to question what established process this action could be taken under, and it was reiterated that the student should lodge a Grievance. We then queried this with the Academic Secretary, who confirmed our view that the matter was in fact out of scope of the Complaints and Grievances Policy, and could not be "reopened" via that pathway.

From the moment the student contacted the Faculty with crucial new information, none of the options presented to them were feasible as they did not accord with any formal University policy or procedure. It is not clear why the Faculty was not amenable to our suggestion of contacting the Academic Secretary for advice on how to proceed, nor why that step had not been considered when the Faculty first acknowledged that the student had presented with new information that deserved to be aired.

By this stage (August 2021) the student's last remaining hope was the Ombudsman complaint. The student experienced some further delays by virtue of the Ombudsman being slow to investigate, but eventually, in late November 2021 the Ombudsman pursued the complaint with the University and made the recommendation that a new Faculty Misconduct Committee should be convened to rehear the allegation (just as the student had argued for in their appeal which was

dismissed without a hearing!). On December 10, the student received an email from the Arts Academic Integrity office confirming that the allegation would be reheard by a new panel in late January 2022.

The rehearing was eventually scheduled for 4 February 2022, but unfortunately the problems did not end there. The correspondence informing the student of the rehearing date contained no new documentation, and simply provided details of the Chair for the rehearing, and a request for the student to accept or decline the invitation. When the student enquired as to what they should prepare for, the Faculty advised that they already had a copy of the written submission previously submitted for the original allegation.

On our advice, the student responded to seek clarification on the terms of the rehearing and whether they would receive a new allegation notice setting out the particulars that they were to respond to. Given the fact the Ombudsman recommendation for a rehearing was based on recognition of significant procedural irregularities with the original disciplinary process – specifically in relation to the provision of critical evidence – we were very concerned that the same errors were being repeated. The Faculty response confirmed these fears: “The case will be reheard with the same allegations previously raised and as such the documentation remains the same...the allegation itself remains the same as before and every attempt has been made to ensure that your hearing will be impartial and independent of the original hearing.”

At this point we sought the student’s permission to write to the Faculty and Academic Secretary to detail our concerns about how the rehearing was being conducted. Specifically, that the student had been issued with exactly the same allegation and supporting documents they were sent in February 2021 when the case was initially heard; that the basis of the Ombudsman complaint was that there was a lack of critical evidence sent with the allegation, which constituted a significant procedural irregularity that spoke directly to the student’s right to a fair hearing; that the allegation for the purposes of the rehearing still did not comply with policy; that simply re-hearing the case with a new panel did not remedy the procedural issues that were investigated by the Ombudsman, and in fact just replicated them.

It was now the day before the scheduled rehearing, and the response from the Faculty was equal parts unexpected and very welcome: “It is the preference of the Faculty of Arts to dismiss this case and not hear it again.”

And so, almost a year to the day after the original allegation was raised, the allegation was dismissed ultimately due to the lack of evidence to substantiate collusion. All of which was available to the original committee, and could have been considered by an appeal committee. But no.

Recommendation:

This case again demonstrates why it is critical for the University to abide by the fundamental principles of procedural fairness, and strict adherence to its own policies, when raising and investigating allegations of misconduct. If the requested evidence had been provided with the original allegation, there is every chance the student would have been able to demonstrate that the allegation was not made out on the evidence, and a full year of anxiety and distress for the student could have been avoided, not to mention that it would have also avoided the significant waste of time and resources that were piled into the appeal process, the further negotiations with the Faculty, the Ombudsman complaint and finally the rehearing.

Advocacy Service Statistics

Comparative data – September - December 2021

This period 695 students were provided a service resulting in 1794 contacts. In the same period last year, the service saw 611 students resulting in 1522 contacts. This represents a fairly significant increase on the corresponding period from 2020, which based on anecdotal observations from staff, is likely explained by a higher volume of complex cases which have required more extensive and ongoing assistance. Another factor was the slight increase in Covid specific enquiries owing to the reinstatement of the WAM amnesty for second half year 2021.

Additionally, the Advocacy website received over 17,0000 page views this period, which continues to be around twice the number of pre-pandemic years. This is consistent with the stats seen in recent reports, and as previously stated, while unsurprising in the context of remote communications, this nevertheless continues to be a clear indicator of the students' reliance on UMSU generally and the Service specifically, for information and support. It is a 28% increase over the same period in 2019, with the most popular pages again featuring information on course academic progress, academic misconduct and special consideration.

Given that the global pandemic is the most significant event to impact on student experience since 2019, this continued increase in web traffic is likely to indicate:

- The ongoing adverse impact of the pandemic on students
- An increase in contested interactions between the University and students.

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.

Previously, the majority of our casework presented via either our contact form or through our drop-in service. However due to the shift to remote service delivery, students have found us through a variety of other sources, many of which are not optimised to collect the usual base data which is routinely collected via our contact form or drop-in service. This includes data on students' faculty, award level (including graduate or undergraduate status) and whether they are a domestic or international student. We have done our best to collect these demographics wherever possible, however the sheer volume and urgency of many contacts has meant that our demographic data is in many cases not as detailed as usual. We have also taken advantage of the reach of our social media channels to provide advice and these contacts may also be lacking in the usual detail. This makes reporting along on graduate/undergraduate and domestic/international lines problematic in this report.

September- December 2021

All Students			Graduate Coursework students			RHD students		
Special Consideration	136	19.57%	Special Consideration	36	17.31%	Supervision Problems	3	15.00%
Academic Misconduct - Plagiarism	101	14.53%	Course Academic Progress Committee	29	13.94%	Progress - HDR	3	15.00%
Course Academic Progress Committee	87	12.52%	Academic Misconduct - Plagiarism	29	13.94%	COVID-19	3	15.00%
Assessment Dispute	83	11.94%	Assessment Dispute	28	13.46%	Assessment Dispute	2	10.00%
COVID-19	76	10.94%	COVID-19	17	8.17%	Academic Misconduct - Plagiarism	2	10.00%
Academic Misconduct - Exam	63	9.06%	Academic Misconduct - Exam	13	6.25%	Remission of Fees	1	5.00%
Academic Misconduct - Collusion	35	5.04%	Academic Misconduct - Collusion	8	3.85%	Enrolment problems	1	5.00%
Academic Misconduct - Other	16	2.30%	Vocational Placement Problems	7	3.37%	Scholarship Issues	1	5.00%
Enrolment problems	14	2.01%	Student complaint about uni staff	6	2.88%	Intellectual Property Dispute	1	5.00%
Student complaint about uni staff	11	1.58%	Other	4	1.92%	Incorrect Advice	1	5.00%
Remission of Fees	11	1.58%	Remission of Fees	4	1.92%	Academic Misconduct - Collusion	1	5.00%
Other	9	1.29%	Enrolment problems	4	1.92%	Not Specified	1	5.00%
General Misconduct	8	1.15%	Not Specified	4	1.92%			
Vocational Placement Problems	8	1.15%	Incorrect Advice	3	1.44%			
Advance Standing Credit/RPL	5	0.72%	Academic Misconduct - Other	3	1.44%			
Incorrect Advice	4	0.58%	Advance Standing Credit/RPL	2	0.96%			
Progress - HDR	4	0.58%	Ongoing special consideration	2	0.96%			
Selection Appeal	4	0.58%	General Misconduct	2	0.96%			
Graduation	4	0.58%	Selection Appeal	2	0.96%			
Cross-institutional enrolment denied	3	0.43%	Bullying	1	0.48%			
Fitness to Practice (FTP)	2	0.29%	Fitness to Practice (FTP)	1	0.48%			
Ongoing special consideration	2	0.29%	Academic Misconduct - Falsified docs	1	0.48%			
Scholarship Issues	2	0.29%	Graduation	1	0.48%			
Intellectual Property Dispute	2	0.29%	Cross-institutional enrolment denied	1	0.48%			
Quality Teaching	1	0.14%						
Bullying	1	0.14%						
Exchange	1	0.14%						
Academic Misconduct - Falsified docs	1	0.14%						
Supervision Problems	1	0.14%						

September- December 2020

All Students			Graduate Coursework students			RHD students		
COVID-19	381	37.76%	COVID-19	122	38.61%	Progress - HDR	5	26.32%
Academic Misconduct - Plagiarism	129	12.78%	Academic Misconduct - Plagiarism	45	14.24%	COVID-19	5	26.32%
Special Consideration	108	10.70%	Special Consideration	39	12.34%	Supervision Problems	4	21.05%
Assessment Dispute	77	7.63%	Assessment Dispute	22	6.96%	Not Specified	2	10.53%
Academic Misconduct - Collusion	65	6.44%	Academic Misconduct - Collusion	18	5.70%	Remission of Fees	1	5.26%
Academic Misconduct - Exam	47	4.66%	Academic Misconduct - Exam	15	4.75%	Enrolment problems	1	5.26%
Enrolment problems	22	2.18%	Not Specified	8	2.53%	Assessment Dispute	1	5.26%
Not Specified	22	2.18%	Course Academic Progress Committee	7	2.22%			
Student Admin - Remission of Fees	21	2.08%	Enrolment problems	7	2.22%			
Selection Appeal	17	1.68%	Other	5	1.58%			
Academic Misconduct - Other	16	1.59%	Vocational Placement Problems	5	1.58%			
Course Academic Progress Committee	15	1.49%	Academic Misconduct - Other	5	1.58%			
Other	14	1.39%	Remission of Fees	4	1.27%			
Advance Standing Credit/RPL	13	1.29%	General Misconduct	2	0.63%			
Student complaint about uni staff	11	1.09%	Selection Appeal	2	0.63%			
General Misconduct	8	0.79%	Advance Standing Credit/RPL	2	0.63%			
Incorrect Advice	6	0.59%	Academic Misconduct - Falsified docs	2	0.63%			
Supervision Problems	6	0.59%	Student complaint about uni staff	2	0.63%			
Vocational Placement Problems	5	0.50%	Bullying	1	0.32%			
Progress - HDR	5	0.50%	Exchange	1	0.32%			
Course structure/changes	4	0.40%	Supervision Problems	1	0.32%			
Quality Teaching	3	0.30%	Special Consideration - ongoing	1	0.32%			
Scholarship Issues	3	0.30%						
Exchange	3	0.30%						
Bullying	2	0.20%						
Academic Misconduct - Falsified docs	2	0.20%						
Special Consideration - ongoing	2	0.20%						
Discrimination	1	0.10%						
Graduation	1	0.10%						

Distribution by graduate/undergraduate status

September- December 2021

Graduate	259	37.27%
Undergraduate	423	60.86%
Not specified	13	1.87%

September- December 2020

Graduate	241	39.57%
Undergraduate	347	56.98%
Not specified	21	3.45%

Distribution by International/Domestic Status

September- December 2021

Domestic	278	40.00%
International	300	43.17%
Not specified	117	16.83%

September- December 2020

Domestic	267	43.84%
International	269	44.17%
Not specified	73	11.99%

Commentary

The proportion of graduate to undergraduate students was 37.27% to 60.86%, which is a continuation of the significant recent change from the steady 50:50 split of previous years. For the last two years during the equivalent period, graduate students have been slightly overrepresented – in 2020 we saw 51.70% graduates to 48.3% undergraduates (compared with 52.23% to 47.77% for the same period in 2019). In the previous report, we identified the most likely reason for this as being due to the overrepresentation of undergraduate students contacting about their concerns that there was no WAM adjustment in the first half year of 2021, and the tendency for undergraduate students to be more concerned about impacts on their WAM, as their future graduate study prospects are directly contingent on this score. In the period covering this report, we saw the reinstatement of the WAMnesty for second half year 2021, and this led to an increase in enquiries along these lines (more on this below).

With regard to the distribution by International/Domestic status, the period covering this report saw a return to a more even split, after a spike in the representation of International students between September 2020 to August 2021. That said, with International students making up 43.17% of contacts compared to 40% for Domestic, this still represents a higher proportion of International students accessing the service compared to pre-pandemic years. This suggests that students studying offshore continued to experience especially difficult circumstances, and further reinforces the view that the University's response to the pandemic served to create a two-tiered student experience. One hopes that things will improve for this cohort as the volume of International students returning to campus continues to increase.

The breakdown of major presenting issues below provides further insights.

Once again, the primary presenting issue overall this period- representing just under 20% of all matters- were issues related to Special Consideration. Matters specifically arising from the impacts of COVID-19 increased slightly compared with the period covering the previous report, up from 7% to 11% of all matters, in contrast to the earlier part of 2021, where they made up around 40% of our casework. As previously observed, this does not mean that students were no longer being affected by the pandemic during the last part of 2021, but rather it reflects the degree to which the University has withdrawn specific programs it had previously provided in response to COVID, which made up the bulk of the presentations to Advocacy for advice. Importantly, this period saw the reinstatement of the WAM amnesty for Second Half Year 2021, after the University had inexplicably withdrawn this safety net for First Half Year 2021. Consequently, a large proportion of Covid specific enquiries to the service during this time concerned the reinstatement of the WAM amnesty, many of which were from students bemused as to why it was previously removed.

The other main Covid specific enquiries concerned applications for Technical Consideration, as we continued to observe some of the unfortunate situations students are forced to grapple with when completing examinations online. A common thread for students in these situations was the quality and reliability of the technology available to them - many students have poor or unreliable internet connection, and devices/software that are not capable of allowing them to efficiently complete tasks such as downloading/uploading/transferring files, etc.

The next most common issue related to problems with and concerns about academic misconduct allegations relating to plagiarism, followed by course academic progress, then assessment disputes and academic misconduct in relation to examinations.

As usual, Special Consideration matters involved assistance with advice on late applications, disputes over outcomes which predominantly concerned late applications, and those deemed to have insufficient evidence.

In the previous report, almost a third of Course Academic Progress matters concerned advice to students for their first attendance. For the period covering this report, that figure increased to almost half, and again the majority of those students cited the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic as the primary reason for their unsatisfactory academic progress (as well as mental health issues, which were often interconnected). CAPC appeals were almost an even split between matters involving restrictions on enrolment and termination of enrolment.

The majority of Course Academic Progress matters arose in the Faculties of Science and Business and Economics, followed by MDHS and then Engineering. Once again for this report, although historically unusual, there were more disputes from undergraduate students than graduates this time, reflecting the fact that many undergraduate students remain extremely concerned at their competitiveness for graduate programs, even with the current Academic Board WAM Resolution.

COVID-19 related matters by Reason

Technical Consideration	33	43.42%
WAM concerns	14	18.42%
Return to Campus	6	7.89%
Special Consideration	4	5.26%
Online teaching quality	4	5.26%
Exchange/study abroad Interrupted	4	5.26%
Vaccine mandate	4	5.26%
LOA/Student Visa	2	2.63%
Fee discounting	2	2.63%
Travel Restrictions	1	1.32%
Tenancy / Legal referral	1	1.32%
Enrolment Problem	1	1.32%
	76	

Distribution of COVID matters by graduate/undergraduate status

September- December 2021

Graduate	25	32.89%
Undergraduate	50	65.79%
Unspecified	1	1.32%

Distribution COVID matters by International/Domestic Status

September- December 2021

Domestic	30	39.47%
International	35	46.05%
Unspecified	11	14.47%

Special Consideration – Contacts by Stage of Process

STAGE	REASON	Total
Application	Late Application	25
Internal Review	Deemed Insufficient Grounds	44
	Late Application	6
	Unhappy with outcome provided	9
		59
Formal Grievance	Deemed Insufficient Grounds	29
	Late Application	11
	Unhappy with outcome provided	9
		49
Appeal	Unhappy with outcome provided	1
Total Special Consideration Matters		136

Special Consideration – by Faculty

Faculty of Science	32	23.53%
Faculty of Arts	26	19.12%
Faculty of Business and Economics	21	15.44%
Faculty of MDHS	17	12.50%
Melbourne School of Design (AB&P)	13	9.56%
Melbourne Graduate School of Education	10	7.35%
Melbourne School of Engineering	9	6.62%
VCA & Music	3	2.21%
Melbourne Law School	2	1.47%
Melbourne Business School (MBS)	2	1.47%
Faculty of Veterinary and Agricultural Sciences	1	0.74%

Special Consideration – by Graduate/Undergraduate

Undergraduate	90	66.18%
Graduate	46	33.82%

Special Consideration – by International/Domestic

Domestic	59	43.38%
International	77	56.62%

Plagiarism – Contacts by Stage of process

STAGE	REASON	Total
Formal/Committee Hearing	Inadvertent	53
	Deliberate	31
		84
Informal/Educative	Inadvertent	8
Academic Board Appeal	Excessive Penalty	4
	Inadvertent	4
Total Plagiarism Related Matters		101

Plagiarism – by Faculty

Faculty of Science	36	41.86%
Faculty of Arts	23	26.74%
Melbourne School of Design (AB&P)	8	9.30%
Faculty of Business and Economics	6	6.98%
Melbourne School of Engineering	4	4.65%
Faculty of Veterinary and Agricultural Sciences	3	3.49%
VCA & Music	2	2.33%
Melbourne Law School	2	2.33%
Melbourne Graduate School of Education	1	1.16%
Faculty of MDHS	1	1.16%

Plagiarism – by Graduate/Undergraduate

Graduate	60	69.77%
Undergraduate	26	30.23%

Plagiarism – by International/Domestic

Domestic	23	26.74%
International	63	73.26%

Course Academic Progress – Contacts by Stage of Process

STAGE	REASON	Total
First Attendance	COVID-19 impacts	19
	Mental health	16
	Online study	1
	Cultural adjustment	1
	Employment	1
	Physical health	1
	39	
Second Attendance	Mental health	16
	COVID-19 impacts	3
	19	
Academic Board Appeal	Restrictions on enrolment	12
	Termination of enrolment	11
	Suspension of enrolment	4
	27	
Ombudsman Vic	Termination of enrolment	1
Total CAPC Related Matters		87

Course Academic Progress – by Faculty

Faculty of Science	22	25.29%
Faculty of Business and Economics	21	24.14%
Faculty of MDHS	12	13.79%
Melbourne School of Engineering	9	10.34%
Faculty of Arts	7	8.05%
Melbourne School of Design (AB&P)	6	6.90%
Melbourne Graduate School of Education	6	6.90%
Faculty of Veterinary and Agricultural Sciences	2	2.30%
VCA & Music	1	1.15%
Melbourne Business School (MBS)	1	1.15%

Course Academic Progress – by Graduate/Undergraduate

Graduate	37	42.53%
Undergraduate	50	57.47%

Course Academic Progress – by International/Domestic

Domestic	55	63.22%
International	32	36.78%

The next Advocacy Service report will cover January to April 2022 and will be available in June 2022.

Paul Lewis-Hornsby

Team Leader, Advocacy Service

May 2022