



ADVOCACY

Service Report January - April 2026



Introduction

The Advocacy Service Report was originally commissioned by the University's *Advocacy Service Reference Group* – a group set up to oversee the service contract via which the Service was funded between 2012 and 2017. The Service Report was originally an accountability measure under the funding contract, but it also served to ventilate student experiences of various processes within the relevant parts of the University. Over time, the circulation of the Report grew to include a 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 'Anecdota'

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 primarily 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.

A quick note on what the various process categories include.

Misconduct	Covers breaches of university rules, regulations and policies, including academic Integrity breaches (e.g., plagiarism, collusion, Gen AI misuse) and general misconduct (e.g., harassment and sexual misconduct, disruptive behaviour, and protest activities).
Special Consideration	a request made by a student for adjustments to assessment or academic requirements due to short-term, serious, and unforeseen circumstances that impact their ability to complete or perform in assessments. Additionally, we currently include ongoing adjustments under this category as the casework frequently overlaps.
"Show Cause / Course Academic Progress (CAPC)	Involves students who are not meeting academic progress requirements and must "Show cause" why they should not be excluded by submitting a formal explanation and supporting evidence.
Assessment and Grades	Concerns related to marking errors, problems with the conduct of assessment, feedback on assessment, and requests for re-marking or review of grades.
Remission of Fees	Requests to have course fees refunded or waived primarily due to withdrawal after census date due to illness or hardship. Increasingly this area overlaps with special consideration as the Student Equity and Disability Services (SEDS) seek to remove assessment of late withdrawal (after final date to withdraw) requests from their responsibility and pass it to the Fees Team.
Student Support Services	Includes issues or feedback about Counselling and Psychological Support Services, the University health Service, SEDS, Fees, Academic Skills Unit, and Stop 1.
The standard of services by the university	Covers general service quality, such as administrative support from IT services, LMS, Library access, and other campus facilities.
The Quality of Teaching	Concerns about effectiveness of teaching and learning, engagement and accessibility of academic staff, subject delivery methods, and the use of learning technologies.
Graduate Researcher (GR) Supervision	Relates to Graduate Researchers and includes supervisor availability and support, access to resources or labs, supervisor feedback frequency and quality, and research guidance.
Advanced Standing or credit	Involves recognition of prior learning, transfer credits from other institutions, and disputes over credit allocation.
Selection Appeal	Used when a student believes they were unfairly denied admission or selection into a course or program.
Graduate Research (GR) Progress	Graduate Researcher students facing university concerns about milestone reviews, delays in research or thesis progress.
Vocational Placement problems	Issues with internship or placement arrangements.
Course structure or changes	Concerns about changes to course content or delivery, prerequisite changes, and course availability.
Scholarship issues	Includes delays in payment, eligibility disputes, and revocations of scholarships.
Student Complaint about another student	Covers primarily interpersonal issues such as bullying or harassment, or other breaches of university policy by students

Trends and Issues

Round and around we go; a circle in a spiral, like a wheel within a wheel

Before making first contact with our service last year, a graduate student submitted a formal grievance about their experience on placement. The grievance concerned both procedural problems with the conduct of placement and issues that would be classed as academic judgements they were disputing. They received an outcome from the Academic Registrar immediately (and correctly) advising that they cannot consider matters relating to the academic judgment of the Board of Examiners. However, the outcome to the grievance did not engage with the procedural aspect raised by the grievance and simply pre-emptively referred the student to the appeal process. The student subsequently followed that option as presented and submitted an appeal, where they broadly explained the issues they had experienced on placement.

Once the student contacted the Advocacy Service and was assigned to a caseworker, their advocate assessed that there were significant procedural issues with the conduct of their placement, but those issues were not particularly well articulated or captured in the appeal (or the original grievance). Additionally, the appeal that had been lodged neither addressed any grounds, nor did it clearly set out the main issues; so it had little chance of success as drafted.

In the grievance outcome, in addition to referring the student to the appeal process, the Academic Registrar concurrently remitted the matter to the Faculty for a further response, which resulted in the Head Of Department (HOD) acknowledging the student's poor experience and giving an undertaking that the school would not place any future students with the mentor teacher involved (a significant concession).

That concession notwithstanding, this did not remedy the student's individual experience, as it only safeguarded future students from experiencing the same problems. After some back and forth between the student and the HOD, the HOD stopped engaging and the student escalated the issue to the Dean. The Dean did not respond directly, but the student received a response to their email from the Faculty Executive Director, who essentially said that nothing further could be done until the appeal outcome was known.

While waiting for the appeal outcome may seem understandable, in this case it seemed clear that the referral to the appeal process was made in error, and regardless, the appeal submission drafted prior to seeking our assistance was likely to be dismissed given its quality. Most importantly, however, as the matter had been remitted to the faculty by the Academic Registrar for further consideration it seemed inevitable to appeal would be deemed unnecessary. There is no doubt that it would have been in the student's best interest to have their concerns addressed and resolved at the local level, to avoid further delays and it was apparent that if the student had not submitted an appeal, the faculty would have been minded to negotiate a resolution directly with them. Unfortunately, having relied on the instruction in the grievance outcome to lodge an appeal to progress the matter meant that the faculty formed the view that they could not further engage with the student's issues at that time.

In considering the factors that 1) the student's appeal was not well constructed, 2) the well-known issues with delays in the appeals process, and 3) that the Academic Registrar had contemporaneously remitted the case for further consideration by the faculty, their advocate's view was that discussions could and should continue with the faculty to reach a more appropriate, direct resolution. So, with the student's permission, their advocate contacted the Faculty Executive Director in an attempt to reopen the lines of communication.

The Faculty Executive Director at first appeared willing to reconsider but ultimately doubled down and said that the student will need to wait for the appeal outcome. In their response they also seemed confused by the roles of the Academic Registrar and the Academic Secretary and had an incorrect understanding of the respective processes that those positions oversee.

The student eventually received an outcome to their appeal (originally submitted on 21 July, on 19 December. Not surprisingly, the outcome was a Notice of Intention to Disallow (NOITD). With our assistance, the student responded to the NOITD clearly setting out all the procedural issues with their placement, while also addressing the latest concerns around the whole process to date.

The student received the final outcome in response to the further information they presented on 5 March 2026 (7 months after the original submission), and the appeal was upheld; they were offered a Withdrawal and fee remission for the subject, as was their requested outcome.

From July 2025 when this matter was first brought to the attention of the faculty, a satisfactory resolution could have been reached in a fraction of the time, had the student firstly not received incorrect advice to appeal, and then subsequently had the faculty realised that further direct communication with the student was the appropriate way to proceed. The back and forth between the Academic Registrar, Academic Secretary and the Faculty only caused more confusion and more delays.

The final appeal outcome stated that *'The further information, provided by you, has been reviewed by the Faculty of [...]. On the basis of your further information, the Faculty have agreed to offer late subject withdrawal and fee remission'*, clearly implying that the faculty had the authority to do this all along but chose instead to make the student wait for an appeal outcome.

Recommendations:

1. The Office of the Academic Registrar is a very senior level of decision-making within the university, and it is imperative that their communications with students are clear and appropriate to the circumstances.
2. Where a matter is remitted to the original decision maker, the decision-maker must make a proper assessment of the best course of action in the circumstances, and where there is any confusion, they must seek clarification from the source of that remittance.

A Tale of Two Subjects*

It was the best of documentation, it was the worst of outcomes

In September 2025 we were approached by a student who was dealing with an enormous personal load. They live with a mental health condition and experience difficulties with executive function, and within a short window two immediate family members were diagnosed with cancer, one of whom died. In this context, their lack of capacity to submit assessments on time in two subjects, and to lodge special consideration inside the four-day window, was entirely predictable and completely understandable.

The student applied for late special consideration for both subjects in a single application, supported by the same extensive documentation. One subject was approved. The other was refused. Same student, same circumstances, same evidence, two different outcomes.

On closer inspection, it appeared that this split decision had nothing to do with the merits of either application. For the refused subject, the coordinator had recorded "withheld pending extension" against the assessment, anticipating an approved application. The Special Consideration team treated that placeholder as the recorded grade, decided the application had therefore been lodged "after release of results", and ruled it ineligible on that basis alone. The coordinator then contacted the team directly, confirmed the placeholder was not a final grade, described the student's work as H1 worthy, and asked that it could be marked. For reasons that were never made clear, this was not accepted, and the ineligible outcome was upheld on review.

So, the student did what every student in this position is left to do and lodged a formal grievance. They explained that the second subject did in fact not have a final grade, that it was simply "withheld pending extension", and should have been approved on the same footing as the first. Additionally, the subject coordinator had attested to the quality of the work and identified the outcome as a misapplication of administrative practice rather than a judgement on the merits; and the supporting correspondence evidenced this clearly.

In the grievance outcome a month later, the ineligible result was confirmed, citing the criteria set out in the special consideration webpages and the *Assessment and Results Policy* (MPF1326):

confirmation that it was not possible, not practicable, or that the circumstances completely prevented the student from performing administrative and/or academic tasks over the entire period, or confirmation that it is "high severity", "severe", such as hospitalisation or the student being in a critical condition or a danger to themselves or others.

The problem is that this threshold is not contained in the policy it claims to apply. Sections 4.133 and 4.134 permit a late application where a student demonstrates that exceptional circumstances made a timely application impracticable. Section 4.134 requires only an explanation for the late submission, evidence that a timely application was not practicable or possible, and the documentation that would accompany a timely application. Nothing in 4.134 requires a student to show they were completely prevented from all administrative and academic tasks across an entire period, and nothing requires hospitalisation or a critical condition, so the outcome confirmed the ineligible decision by reference to criteria the policy does not contain. In fact, the "no applications will be accepted after release of results" position (itself a relatively recent operational practice of the Special Consideration team) is not authorised by the policy either, quite the opposite, yet every stage of this matter leaned on fictional provisions of the policy to justify it.

The student then appealed to the Academic Board, in early 5 November 2025. As at 16 April 2026, almost six months later and despite several follow-ups, there has still been no outcome. By mid-April it was simply too close to the end of their degree for the student to wait for a resolution, and they were effectively forced to take a late withdrawal via the fee remission process in order to keep a fail grade off their transcript. They then enrolled in a different subject for Semester 1 because the original was no longer offered. Ultimately, through extremely poor academic governance, the student lost the chance to complete the subject in a timely way and attain the H1 the subject coordinator said the work deserved.

What began in September 2025 as a single special consideration application ultimately dragged the student through five separate processes, each more onerous than the last, spilling across a teaching period and into the following year.

Recommendations

1. Rights under policy must be afforded to the student. The current practice by the Special Consideration team to refuse applications lodged after release of results cuts directly across rights enshrined in policy to recognition of special circumstances on academic performance.
2. If this is to become policy, then it still cannot be used to fetter discretion - refusal of applications be made automatically or dismissively. Each application, and each reason for lateness, must be assessed on its merits against the criteria in section 4.134.
3. Appeals to the Academic Board must be resolved within the timeframes the policy contemplates. A six-month silence is not simply 'a delay', it is an active extinguishing of a student's rights and options and converts reviewable decisions into fait accompli.

*Tip o' the Nib to Dickens.

That's some catch, that catch-22*

To get your enrolment back you need the refund. To get the refund you need the enrolment.

Over the past few years, the University has made a number of deliberate and strategic moves to reduce a volume of special consideration applications, particularly in circumstances where it suspects students of seeking to convert a fail grade into a withdrawal. It's worth pointing out in this context, that seeking a late withdrawal to avoid a fail on one's transcript is a perfectly legitimate reason to apply for special consideration and still requires the student to meet the same high evidentiary threshold as any other applicant. The timing is an administrative issue that must not be used to defeat the merit of the application.

One attempt to stem the volume of special consideration applications is to take a markedly stricter approach to late applications, including refusing to accept an application deemed to have been lodged after the release of results. The practical effect has been to push a substantial volume of matters out of special consideration processes and into Fee Remission in Special Circumstances, shifting the burden squarely onto the Fees Team.

We have raised two main arguments against this diversion. Firstly, that the special consideration process gives students more avenues to dispute an adverse decision, at higher and more independent levels, and mostly within shorter and fixed timelines. Routing the same students through the Fee Remission process simply strips a lot of those procedural protections away. The second argument is just simple pragmatism - an increase in Fee Remission applications, against finite resourcing, will inevitably result in yet another university process dealing with time sensitive matters that have completely unsustainable timelines. We have been therefore wholly unsurprised to see that this has completely blown out the fee remission timelines.

At the time of writing, the University's Fee Remission advice page puts the average turnaround for a standard application at 101 working days, and the average turnaround for a review at a further 105 working days. Consequently, a student whose initial application is refused, and who seeks a review, is looking at upwards of **200 working days** from lodgement to a final outcome. That's the better part of a working year spent waiting for a decision the student is unlikely to be able to effectively plan around and has no capacity to expedite anything.

A recent matter shows how this kind of delay impacts a student in practice.

An international student contacted the Advocacy Service on 11 March 2026 seeking urgent advice. They had received a notice of enrolment cancellation for overdue tuition fees. Subsequently they lodged a Fee Remission application on 2 October 2025, nearly five months before contacting us, and had heard nothing. They had originally planned to apply any refunded fees to their Semester 1 2026 tuition, which by march was looking increasingly unlikely.

The student had already asked the University whether the overdue-fee and enrolment cancellation process could be paused pending the outcome of the Fee Remission application. They were told it could not, because Fee Remission is a separate process from enrolment, a fairly nonsensical non-sequitur in our opinion. So, the student found themselves in a closed loop: their enrolment cancelled for non-payment of their fees while waiting on the decision that would have funded that payment... nobody wins.

We advised the student that one option was to lodge a formal grievance about the Enrolment Team's refusal to extend the due date, though with the caveat that we did not rate its prospects highly. We also pointed them to the University's Financial Aid team for any interim support, and we asked the Fees Team to expedite the remission application, of course. As of this Service Report, the student remains in limbo.

What a wonderful world the university has built, where a diversion designed to discourage one category of application (special consideration) has produced a system in which a fee-paying student has their place in their course put at risk, not by anything they have done or failed to do, but by an administrative delay the University itself engineered. For an international student, whose enrolment underpins both a Confirmation of Enrolment and a visa, this is effectively the difference between continuing their degree and being forced out of the country mid-course.

The University appears galvanised in its treatment of special consideration as a leak to be plugged and Fee Remission as the drain into which it can be diverted. But sadly, even drains have a limited capacity... after which the effluent flows straight onto the student in the form of months of uncertainty. To flog this grim analogy a bit further, there is also a backwash on the Fees Team in the form of an unmanageable backlog, and on the University at large as the reputational and human consequences will inevitably flow.

Recommendations

1. Where a student has a live Fee Remission in Special Circumstances application on foot, any overdue-fee escalation or enrolment cancellation arising from the delay must be paused pending the outcome. This is especially critical for international students, for whom cancellation carries immediate Confirmation of Enrolment and visa consequences.
2. If the University intends to continue diverting volume from special consideration into Fee Remission, it must resource the Fees Team to absorb that volume and meet a published service standard. Turnaround figures of 101 and 105 working days, compounding to more than 200 on review, are not consistent with any meaningful duty of care to students whose enrolment depends on the outcome.

Uniformly denying late special consideration applications has simply shifted the burden to another under-resourced area of the University, creating a massive fee remission backlog. We are strongly of the view that attempting to address the consequences one team at a time cannot fix the problem. A review of how special consideration, fee remission, and enrolment processes interact is required, rather than continuing to kick this can down the road to another over-extended area.

*Thanks to Joseph Heller, and yes, insanity really is contagious...

Bouquets and brickbats

Our Service reports generally contain a fair bit of critique around university interactions with students, although we do try to make a note of positives and successful collaborations that bring fairer outcomes when they occur. In this context, it seems only reasonable to include feedback the Advocacy Service receives from our service users. Students are sent a link to our exit survey at the completion of our casework service, and many take the opportunity to provide feedback. The results from this reporting period are below.

Overall, how satisfied were you with the service you received?

Very Satisfied	100%
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How satisfied were you with accessibility and inclusiveness

Very Satisfied	100%
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How satisfied were you with our sensitivity and understanding

Very Satisfied	100%
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Would you use our service in the future?

Definitely	86%
Probably	14%

How satisfied were you with how quickly we responded?

Very Satisfied	100%
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How satisfied were you with our knowledge and expertise

Very Satisfied	100%
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How satisfied were you with how well we explained things

Very Satisfied	100%
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Would you recommend our service to other students?

Definitely	86%
Probably	14%

Any specific ideas on how we could improve our service?

- I had a fantastic experience with Nadia, I wouldn't change a thing!
- "Went very well. Very supportive and understanding.
- Excellent! Thank you for the support!
- I believe the service could be improved by making it more visible and accessible. Many people may not fully understand their rights or realise that they can seek help at any time. Increasing outreach and awareness would encourage individuals to access support as early as possible. Personally, I would not have been aware of this support service if a friend had not informed me about it. Other than that, 11/10 experience and service! :)

Advocacy Service Statistics

January - April 2026

Academic Misconduct	103	25.94%
Academic Progress (Coursework)	61	15.37%
Special Consideration	49	12.34%
Assessment Dispute	25	6.30%
Fee Remission	34	8.56%
Complaint	26	6.55%
Selection and Admission	10	2.52%
General Misconduct	9	2.27%
Academic Progress (Graduate Research)	12	3.02%
Appeal Delay Complaint	5	1.26%
Bullying, Discrimination, Sexual Harassment	4	1.01%
Enrolment	3	0.76%
Supervision Issues	2	0.50%
Fitness to Practice	2	0.50%
Poor Academic Practice	1	0.25%
Visa Issue	1	0.25%
Fee Issue (not remission)	1	0.25%
GBV Referral	1	0.25%
Scholarship Issues	1	0.25%
Subject/Course Advice (Stop 1 referral)	1	0.25%
Detrimental Reliance / Incorrect Advice	1	0.25%
Placement Problems	1	0.25%
SEDS (Ongoing Support)	1	0.25%
Other	43	10.83%

The Service moved to a new Case Management System at the end of 2025 so comparative data on primary issue will be unavailable until 2027.

January - April 2026

Distribution by graduate/undergraduate status

Undergraduate	200	50.38%
Graduate Coursework	171	43.07%
Graduate Researcher (GR)	26	6.55%

January - April 2025

Distribution by graduate/undergraduate status

Undergraduate	147	48.51%
Graduate Coursework	139	45.87%
Graduate Researcher (GR)	17	5.61%

January - April 2026

Process	Graduate Coursework	GR	Undergraduate
Academic Misconduct	34.95%	0.97%	59.22%
Academic Progress (Coursework)	31.15%	0.00%	52.46%
Special Consideration	36.73%	0.00%	53.06%
Assessment Dispute	48.00%	4.00%	48.00%
Fee Remission	20.59%	0.00%	79.41%
Complaint	61.54%	15.38%	15.38%
Selection and Admission	40.00%	0.00%	60.00%
General Misconduct	44.44%	0.00%	44.44%
Academic Progress (Graduate Research)	16.66%	83.33%	0.00%
Appeal Delay Complaint	60.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Bullying, Discrimination, Sexual Harassment	50.00%	0.00%	50.00%
Enrolment	0.00%	0.00%	66.67%
Supervision Issues	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%
Fitness to Practice	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Poor Academic Practice	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
Visa Issue	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%
Fee Issue (not remission)	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%
GBV Referral	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Scholarship Issues	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%
Subject/Course Advice (Stop 1 referral)	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%
Detrimental Reliance / Incorrect Advice	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
Placement Problems	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%
SEDS (Ongoing Support)	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
Other	37.21%	9.30%	46.51%

January - April 2026

Domestic	192	48.36%
International	205	51.64%

January - April 2025

Distribution by International/Domestic Status

Domestic	159	52.48%
International	144	47.52%

January - April 2026

Primary issue by international or domestic status

Process	Domestic	International
Academic Misconduct	48.54%	46.60%
Academic Progress (Coursework)	37.70%	47.54%
Special Consideration	55.10%	34.69%
Assessment Dispute	60.00%	40.00%
Fee Remission	29.41%	70.59%
Complaint	50.00%	38.46%
Selection and Admission	90.00%	10.00%
General Misconduct	33.33%	66.67%
Academic Progress (Graduate Research)	41.67%	58.33%
Appeal Delay Complaint	20.00%	40.00%
Bullying, Discrimination, Sexual Harassment	50.00%	50.00%
Enrolment	33.33%	33.33%
Supervision Issues	50.00%	50.00%
Fitness to Practice	100.00%	0.00%
Poor Academic Practice	100.00%	0.00%
Visa Issue	0.00%	100.00%
Fee Issue (not remission)	100.00%	0.00%
GBV Referral	100.00%	0.00%
Scholarship Issues	100.00%	0.00%
Subject/Course Advice (Stop 1 referral)	0.00%	100.00%
Detrimental Reliance / Incorrect Advice	0.00%	100.00%
Placement Problems	100.00%	0.00%
SEDS (Ongoing Support)	100.00%	0.00%
Quality of Teaching		
Other	39.53%	55.81%

January - April 2026

Cases By Faculty

Faculty of Science	100	25.19%
Faculty of Arts	58	14.61%
Faculty of Business and Economics	55	13.85%
Faculty of MDHS	44	11.08%
FEIT	24	6.05%
Melbourne School of Design (AB&P)	16	4.03%
Melbourne Law School	26	6.55%
MGSE	15	3.78%
VCA & Music	11	2.77%
MBS	2	0.50%
FVAS	3	0.76%
(unspecified)*	43	10.83%

*The Service moved to a new case management System in December 2025, and some data collection practices are still being refined.

January - April 2026

Process by Faculty

	Academic Misconduct	Assessment Dispute	Special Consideration	Show Cause/CAPC
Faculty of Science	22.00%	9.00%	9.00%	16.00%
Faculty of Arts	46.55%	3.45%	5.17%	10.34%
Faculty of Business and Economics	25.45%	7.27%	10.91%	20.00%
Faculty of MDHS	25.00%	9.09%	6.82%	4.55%
FEIT	29.17%	0.00%	16.67%	20.83%
Melbourne School of Design (AB&P)	0.00%	0.00%	18.75%	18.75%
Melbourne Law School	23.08%	15.38%	19.23%	11.54%
MGSE	26.67%	6.67%	13.33%	13.33%
VCA & Music	36.36%	0.00%	27.27%	0.00%
MBS	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
FVAS	33.33%	0.00%	33.33%	0.00%

January - April 2026

Disclosed disability

	2026		2025	
Disclosed a disability	46	11.59%	44	14.81%
No disability disclosed	351	88.41%	253	85.19%

January - April 2026

Preferred method of contact with Service

Email	35%
In Person	25%
Drop in	20%
Phone	10%
Live Chat	10%

Commentary

This period 397 students were provided a service, compared with 303 students for the same period in 2025, a notable increase on the start of last year. The proportion of undergraduate to graduate coursework students was 51.15% to 43.07%, with just over 6% being graduate researchers. For the same period last year, the split was 48.51% undergraduate to 45.87% graduate coursework, with about 5.6% graduate researchers. Presentations this period were fairly evenly divided between domestic and international students, at 48.36% domestic students to 51.64% international; while the same period last year saw 52.48% domestic to 47.52% international students. During this time 46 students (11.59%) identified as living with a disability, compared with 44 students (14.81%) at the same time last year.

Direct year on year comparison of primary issue categories is not available this period, following the move to a new case management system at the end of 2025, and will not be available until 2027. Within this period, however, academic misconduct returned as the single most represented issue, at just over a quarter of all presentations (25.94%). This follows the marked reduction in misconduct presentations observed through 2025, after changes to the academic integrity policy reduced the number of students attending discipline hearings. 'Show Cause' (Academic Progress, Coursework) matters were the next most represented at 15.37%, followed by special consideration applications and disputes at 12.34%. While it is not unusual for 'Show Cause' matters to feature strongly at this time of year, the return of misconduct to the top of the table is worth watching across the remaining reporting periods.

Most students seeking assistance with 'Show Cause' (Academic Progress) matters came from the faculties of Science, FBE, Arts and FEIT. Just over half were undergraduates (52.46%), and international students slightly outnumbered domestic students, at 47.54% to 37.70%.

Academic misconduct matters were predominantly undergraduate (59.22%) and were spread fairly evenly between domestic (48.54%) and international (46.60%) students. They were concentrated in the faculties of Arts and Science, with Arts recording the highest proportion of misconduct matters, at 46.55%.

Special consideration applications and disputes were more highly represented in undergraduate (53.06%) than graduate coursework (36.73%) students, and most often by domestic students, at 55.10% to 34.69%. Science accounted for the largest number of these matters, though the highest within faculty rates were recorded at the VCA and Music, Melbourne Law School, the Melbourne School of Design and FEIT. This pattern sits alongside the special consideration and fee remission issues discussed in the Trends and Issues section above.

There is still insufficient longitudinal data to draw firm conclusions about the slight decrease in self-identified disability, from 14.81% in the same period last year to 11.59% this period.

Email remained the most common way students made contact with the Service, at 35% of presentations. A quarter of students asked for in person appointments, a fifth would prefer to use a drop-in service, and the remainder made contact by phone or live chat.

The next Advocacy Service report will cover the period May to August 2026 and will be available in mid-September 2026.

Paul Lewis-Hornsby

Team Leader, Advocacy Service

June 2026