# ADVOCACY

**Service Report May - August 2026**

UMSU
UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE STUDENT UNION

## 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 'Anecdata'

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. |
| **RHD Supervision** | Relates to Research Higher Degree (RHD) students 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. |
| **RHD Progress** | RHD 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

### Appeal to the Gods, faster than the Student Appeals process

You may recall this issue from a previous edition of these reports, and we sure wish we didn't have to raise it again.

Such is the state of the appeals process at the University, and the continued refusal of those responsible to address its shortcomings, that we have been forced to spend our time creating a spreadsheet for the students we are assisting in order to monitor the time their appeals spend awaiting determination by the Academic Board.

The spreadsheet has now disappeared off the bottom of the screen – it's well beyond 30 rows, and covers appeals that run the gamut from Academic progress terminations, suspensions, and enrolment restrictions, through Special Consideration eligibility and adjustment disputes, to Academic Misconduct penalties of all shapes and sizes, appeals relating to professional placement issues, Selection appeals and more.

And these languishing disputes are just from the students who have sought our advice; we shudder to think what the total number is.

The wait times range from 2-12 months (yes, *12* months = 1 calendar year), and this is having a profound effect, not just on the wellbeing of the students in limbo, but more practically on their ability to manage their studies while the appeal is pending. Delays of this length will also obviously impact on the possibility of resolving their matters appropriately and fairly. Students enduring lengthy waits for their appeals to be determined face issues including:

- inability to enrol in further units due to points restrictions
- auditing and keeping up with subjects for entire semesters and completing all assessments/exams, while being unable to formally enrol, and with the very real possibility that it will all have been a waste of time if/when their appeal is disallowed
- financial hardship/employment impacts due to delayed course progression
- visa precarity
- severe emotional distress and uncertainty
- significant mental health injuries including feelings of helplessness and despair

Many of these students contact us multiple times a week, in ever increasing states of distress, to seek our advice on what they can possibly to do to get an outcome for their appeal. Consequently, the Advocacy Service, already stretched to the limits of our capacity, must also devote a significant amount of time advising students on the steps they can take to try and prompt action on their appeals. However, it is demoralising to have to give that advice while knowing that their pleas are likely to go unheeded.

Here are some examples of the real impacts of these delays:

*"As a result of your failure to respond, I have had to sit in on classes and tutorials, yet I cannot physically access the LMS page, thus disadvantaging my learning. I cannot interact on ED discussion board or view announcements from my teachers, since I cannot enrol into more subjects."*

*"I have constantly been calling Stop 1, and been redirected multiple times, trying to gain assistance in any way I can, since December, I have been driven in circles, yet no action has commenced."*

*"I am still feeling quite stressed and anxious about my situation, and I think I need a bit more guidance to help me navigate this."*

*"I am feeling extremely overwhelmed by this unresolved appeal issue. I submitted the student appeal three months ago; however, I have not received any updates about the Academic Board hearing schedule."*

*"I am feeling suffocated by this issue, and it greatly affects my mental health, overall wellbeing, academic performance, etc."*

*"This has been a longstanding issue now and has exacerbated my current mental health challenges quite significantly. It also continues to affect my ability to graduate…and thus apply for jobs or other courses. My enquiries to the appeals team were met with generic responses about their high volume of appeals to process without any real indication on my situation. At this point my mental and physical health has deteriorated, as I informed them it would in my appeal and I don't have any other avenues to try and receive an outcome."*

**Recommendations:**

We want to make it very clear that this is not a criticism of the staff in the Student Appeals team, who must themselves be suffocating under the weight of their workload. The responsibility lies with senior University leadership, whose ongoing refusal to adequately resource this essential area of student services has allowed these delays and backlogs to persist.

The University desperately needs to recognise that it is a fundamental rule of procedural fairness to seek reviews of decisions which affect a person's rights and interests, and that the review processes must be conducted in a timely manner to ensure students' rights are not further impacted by unnecessary and unreasonable delays and that appropriate remedies do not become unachievable. This is especially critical at the final stage of appeal and can only be delivered if the university recognises that adequate resourcing is required to meet demand.

As a postscript – we also saw this response from the Appeals Team to a student who requested a weeklong extension to provide supporting documentation:

> *Whilst we are able to facilitate requests for extensions, please be aware that delays in submitting a completed appeal may affect the remedies the appeals process can provide if the appeal is upheld.*

This objectively demonstrates that the Appeals Team is aware that delays in the process frequently cause students detriment. When the University takes months and months to complete the initial assessment of appeals, it's difficult to reconcile the position that students by contrast only have 20-working days to lodge an appeal, and if they request a short-extension, they are told that their preferred outcome may not be available.

## Strict enforcement of policies that don't exist

The *Assessment and Results Policy* is crystal clear on the threshold that students must meet if a late application for special consideration is to be accepted:

> *4.133. The Academic Registrar will determine whether a late application for special consideration will be accepted.*
>
> *4.134. Students submitting a late application for special consideration must provide:*
>
> *a)* ***an explanation for late submission of the application and evidence to show that the submission of a timely application was not practicable and/or possible****, and*
>
> *b) all other supporting documentation required for a timely application.*

However, increasingly we are assisting a large volume of students who have run up against a - shall we say *creative* - new way for the Special Consideration team to interpret and implement the process.

The published advice on the university website – which needless to say does not represent a higher authority than the policy itself – advises students that:

> *Late applications will only be accepted if you:*
>
> - *Apply before the release of subject results, and*
> - *Were unable to submit your application on time (for example due to hospitalisation, severe trauma or close personal or family bereavement), and*
> - *Submit supporting documents that confirm the impact of those circumstances.*
>
> *We do not accept applications after the release of subject results. If you missed the deadline and have failed a subject, you may be eligible to* ***apply for fee remission****. As this is a separate process to Special Consideration, please familiarise yourself with eligibility criteria and documentation requirements before applying.*

Not only does the policy fail to stipulate that applications lodged after the release of results cannot be accepted, we also saw a seemingly deliberate effort to redefine the date of release in a way that disadvantaged affected students.

During late June and early July, numerous applications were refused on the basis of a rule that does not exist in the policy and, further, on the basis of an arbitrary interpretation of when a result was considered to have been released. Although the official release date was 10 July, students were prevented from applying if more than one day had elapsed since their provisional result first appeared in the system. The practical effect was to shorten the application period by reference to a date that was neither the official release date nor one identified in the policy as materially significant.

When students then requested a review and argued that their applications should not be denied on the basis of a *provisional* result (ie; a result that was not yet official), the review outcomes stated that *"**This policy provision is strictly enforced**. Please further note that while the published result release date is listed as 10 July 2026 online, in reality, results commence their release in batches about one week before that deadline".*

Only thing is, there is no such policy provision. It does not exist.

And regarding the release of results date, in all other university contexts, students are not permitted to act on a result until it is finalised and ratified on the published date, but in this context, the Special Consideration team has cynically used the dates of provisional results to justify their refusal to accept a late application, even if the student may have provided the explanation and evidence required of them under section 4.134(a).

This operational approach, which is inconsistent with the policy, is one of several measures adopted by the Special Consideration team in recent years that have had the effect of reducing the number of applications accepted for assessment. The consequences for affected students have been significant. Students who are unable to access the Special Consideration process are instead pushed into the Fee Remission pathway, where delays are substantially longer. The average processing time for an initial Fee Remission application is 37 working days, while the average turnaround time for a review of a Fee Remission decision is 104 working days. As a result, students who are denied access to Special Consideration can face months of additional delay before obtaining an outcome.

Further, the Fee Remission process only allows for one internal review of a decision (as opposed to the special consideration process, which can progress all the way to an appeal to the Academic Board), and does not offer the student the opportunity to seek other academic adjustments, as only a Late Withdrawal from the subject can result from an eligible application.

This blanket refusal to consider applications lodged after the release of results (whatever date you want to apply) denies students any chance to prove that they meet the criteria set out in section 4.134(a), and also goes directly against the purpose and principle of special consideration, as set out in section 4.123(a):

> *4.123. Special consideration is an equity measure to ensure that the assessment of students takes into account circumstances that adversely impact a student's ability to undertake, prepare for, and/or complete an assessment task.*
>
> *a)* ***Granting special consideration enables students who have been impacted an alternative/additional opportunity to demonstrate their level of attainment of intended learning outcomes.***

If anyone is wondering why the University is consistently at the bottom of student satisfaction surveys, look no further…

**Recommendations:**

Our radical suggestion is for the Special Consideration team to interpret and implement policy as it is written, so that students get the chance to meet the criteria for a late application to be accepted, and therefore the opportunity to have academic adjustments implemented which make the completion of assessment possible.

## Everybody makes mistakes, but not everybody tries to fix them (Gatekeeping and Gaslighting edition)

In August this year, we were contacted by a student who had presented to Stop 1 in January 2026 seeking enrolment assistance. After a full review of their study plan, they were instructed by a course advisor to self-enrol in a specific set of subjects which would lead them to graduate at the end of the year.

When the student attempted to self-enrol into those subjects, the system would not allow it, so they returned to Stop 1 the following week to seek clarification on their proposed enrolment for the semester ahead. The same course advisor reviewed their enrolment again and manually overrode the system to enrol the student in the subjects they had previously advised were needed to fulfil course requirements.

In July, the student returned to Stop 1 to confirm that the subjects they completed in FHY were correct, and their planned subjects for SHY were correct.

At this point, the student was notified that they had previously been given incorrect advice, and that they were missing a Level 1 required subject. The course advisor then submitted a waiver for this subject on the student's behalf and advised the student this would be accepted.

Unfortunately, in early August the student was then advised that the waiver was not in fact approved, and that they would be required to complete an additional subject in order to graduate.

This naturally came as an unpleasant shock, and the student proceeded to submit a formal complaint with our assistance.

While there is an expectation that students are responsible for understanding the requirements of their course and managing their enrolment accordingly, that responsibility is not equally shared when a student has actively sought guidance from the University's designated advisers and relied upon the advice they provided.

The student was proactive in seeking assistance with their course planning and took all reasonable steps to ensure that they understood and met their obligations as a student.

Mistakes happen. Heads do not need to roll if an administrative error occurs. The problem was not that the first advice given in January was incorrect; it is that there followed two opportunities for university staff to remedy the error, but instead they doubled down with actions that only served to further disadvantage the student.

Rather than seeking further clarification and checking for an error which would have explained why the student could not self-enrol, the first course advisor instead chose to manually override the enrolment system to preserve their original, incorrect advice.

Subsequent to that, after Stop 1 identified and acknowledged the error, the response afforded no meaningful remedy, and actually shifted the burden onto the student, as they were expected to pay for and complete an additional subject in order to meet the course requirements (the student was told they should just overload for their final semester or return next year to complete the subject). This 'solution' also minimised the impact of the University's actions and their culpability.

**Recommendations**

At the time of writing, we are unaware of the outcome of the formal complaint, but we are hopeful that there will be an acknowledgement that the university is responsible for the student's disadvantage in this matter and that it will be remedied by either allowing the student to graduate with the credits they have completed, or by waiving the tuition fees for any additional subject that needs to be completed.

## Major Increase in Service Demand

As reported at the same time last year, demand for the Service continued to increase through the middle of the year. The growth compared with the corresponding period in 2025 has been particularly significant. The statistics below highlight the scale of this increase:

May to August 2025

| | |
|---|---|
| Total cases | 620 |
| Graduate Coursework | 44% |
| RHD | 2% |
| Undergraduate | 55% |
| Referred from the University (incl. Stop 1) | 23% |

Main issues: Special Consideration, Academic Misconduct, Assessment Disputes, CAPC and Fee Remission

May to August 2026

| | |
|---|---|
| Total cases | 754 |
| Graduate Coursework | 36% |
| RHD | 4% |
| Undergraduate | 58% |
| Referred from the University (incl. Stop 1) | 40% |

Main issues: Academic Misconduct, Special Consideration, CAPC, Assessment Disputes and Fee Remission

**Commentary:**

Demand for the Service continued to increase through the middle of the year. Between May and August, the Service assisted 754 students, compared with 620 during the same period in 2025, an increase of 21.61%. This four-month period alone saw almost twice as many students as January to April (397), bringing the total number of students assisted in the first eight months of the year to more than 1,150.

Growth was concentrated among undergraduate students, whose numbers increased from 338 to 438 (up 29.59%). Graduate coursework presentations remained stable (271 compared with 268), while graduate researcher presentations increased from 11 to 33. Although still a relatively small cohort, these matters are often complex and resource-intensive, particularly where they involve supervision or candidature issues.

The profile of matters presented to the Service also shifted. Academic misconduct matters increased from 122 to 202 (up 65.57%), largely reflecting the growing prevalence of generative AI-related allegations. Show Cause (CAPC) matters rose from 63 to 84 (up 33.33%). By contrast, special consideration matters declined from 142 to 123, while assessment disputes (80 to 77) and fee remission matters (53 to 54) remained broadly stable.

Referrals from the University, including Stop 1, accounted for 40.45% of presentations, compared with 23.00% in 2025. Currently this means that approximately two in every five students who present to the Service have been referred by the University.

July was the busiest month in both years, with 295 students assisted in 2026 compared with 235 in 2025. The largest proportional increase, however, occurred in May, when presentations rose from 81 to 138 students.

In response to this sustained growth, the Service has continued to review its service delivery model to identify further efficiencies and maintain timely assistance for students. While this work remains ongoing, demand has continued to increase at a rate that cannot be met through efficiency measures alone. As student advocacy and representation are recognised uses of SSAF funding, and the SSAF framework is intended to ensure students have access to funded services, additional resourcing through future SSAF allocations will be necessary to maintain service accessibility and responsiveness.

## Bouquets and brickbats

Our Service reports often identify concerns arising from students' interactions with the University. At the same time, we seek to acknowledge positive developments and productive collaboration where these contribute to fairer outcomes for students. In that context, it is also useful to consider feedback received directly from students who have used our Service.

Students are invited to complete an exit survey at the conclusion of their matter, and many take the opportunity to provide feedback on their experience.

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

| Very Satisfied | 100% |
|---|---|
| - | - |

Would you use our service in the future?

| Definitely | 100% |
|---|---|
| - | - |

How satisfied were you with how quickly we responded?

| Very Satisfied | 80% |
|---|---|
| Neutral | 20% |

How satisfied were you with our knowledge and expertise

| Very Satisfied | 100% |
|---|---|
| - | - |

How satisfied were you with accessibility and inclusiveness

| Very Satisfied | 100% |
|---|---|
| - | - |

How satisfied were you with how well we explained things

| Very Satisfied | 100% |
|---|---|
| - | - |

How satisfied were you with our sensitivity and understanding

| Very Satisfied | 100% |
|---|---|
| - | - |

Would you recommend our service to other students?

| Definitely | 100% |
|---|---|
| - | - |

How did you hear about our service?

| | |
|---|---|
| Stop 1 | 33% |
| A notice or email from the university | 33% |
| Word of Mouth | 17% |
| Can't remember | 17% |

## Advocacy Service Statistics

**May - August 2026 - Primary Issue**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Academic Misconduct | 202 | 26.79% |
| Special Consideration | 123 | 16.31% |
| Academic Progress (Coursework) | 89 | 11.80% |
| Assessment Dispute | 81 | 10.74% |
| Fee Remission | 54 | 7.16% |
| Complaint | 40 | 5.31% |
| Enrolment | 37 | 4.91% |
| GBV Referral | 26 | 3.45% |
| Other | 21 | 2.79% |
| Placement Problems | 17 | 2.25% |
| General Misconduct | 13 | 1.72% |
| Supervision Issues | 11 | 1.46% |
| Selection and Admission | 10 | 1.33% |
| Subject/Course Advice (Stop 1 referral) | 7 | 0.93% |
| Academic Progress (Graduate Research) | 5 | 0.66% |
| SEDS (Ongoing Support) | 5 | 0.66% |
| Credit/Advanced Standing | 4 | 0.53% |
| Fee Issue (not remission) | 3 | 0.40% |
| Fitness to Practice | 2 | 0.27% |
| Graduation | 1 | 0.13% |
| Visa Issue | 1 | 0.13% |
| Legal Referral | 1 | 0.13% |
| Scholarship Issues | 1 | 0.13% |

**May - August 2025 - Primary Issue**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Special Consideration | 142 | 22.90% |
| Academic Misconduct | 122 | 19.68% |
| Assessment Dispute | 80 | 12.90% |
| Show Cause / Course Academic Progress (CAPC) | 63 | 10.16% |
| Fee Remission | 53 | 8.55% |
| Enrolment | 22 | 3.55% |
| Complaint | 21 | 3.39% |
| Grievance | 16 | 2.58% |
| Placement Problems | 15 | 2.42% |
| General Misconduct | 11 | 1.77% |
| Selection Dispute | 11 | 1.77% |
| Late Withdrawal | 9 | 1.45% |
| Supervision | 9 | 1.45% |
| Credit/Advanced Standing | 7 | 1.13% |
| Graduation | 5 | 0.81% |
| SEDS- Equitable Adjustments | 5 | 0.81% |
| Exchange | 5 | 0.81% |
| Scholarship | 5 | 0.81% |
| Disallowed Appeal | 3 | 0.48% |
| NSO Referral | 3 | 0.48% |
| Fitness To Practice/Study | 3 | 0.48% |
| Readmission | 3 | 0.48% |
| Progress RHD | 3 | 0.48% |
| Incorrect Advice | 2 | 0.32% |
| Visa Issues | 1 | 0.16% |
| Leave of Absence | 1 | 0.16% |

**May - August 2026**

**Distribution by graduate/undergraduate status**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Undergraduate** | 438 | 58.09% |
| **Graduate Coursework** | 283 | 37.53% |
| **RHD** | 33 | 4.38% |

**May - August 2025**

**Distribution by graduate/undergraduate status**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Undergraduate | 338 | 54.52% |
| Graduate Coursework | 271 | 43.71% |
| RHD | 11 | 1.77% |

**May - August 2026**

Primary issue by study type

| Process | Graduate Coursework | RHD | Undergraduate |
|---|---|---|---|
| Academic Progress (Graduate Research) | 0.00% | 100.00% | 0.00% |
| Visa Issue | 0.00% | 100.00% | 0.00% |
| Supervision Issues | 9.09% | 72.73% | 18.18% |
| Subject/Course Advice (Stop 1 referral) | 0.00% | 50.00% | 50.00% |
| SEDS (Ongoing Support) | 20.00% | 20.00% | 60.00% |
| Complaint | 36.67% | 20.00% | 43.33% |
| Selection and Admission | 0.00% | 10.00% | 80.00% |
| Other | 42.86% | 9.52% | 42.86% |
| General Misconduct | 53.85% | 7.69% | 30.77% |
| GBV Referral | 38.46% | 3.85% | 50.00% |
| Academic Progress (Coursework) | 35.71% | 3.57% | 59.52% |
| Academic Misconduct | 34.16% | 0.99% | 63.86% |
| Legal Referral | 0.00% | 0.00% | 100.00% |
| Scholarship Issues | 0.00% | 0.00% | 100.00% |
| Credit/Advanced Standing | 25.00% | 0.00% | 75.00% |
| Special Consideration | 31.71% | 0.00% | 66.67% |
| Fee Remission | 27.78% | 0.00% | 66.67% |
| Enrolment | 32.43% | 0.00% | 64.86% |
| Assessment Dispute | 42.86% | 0.00% | 55.84% |
| Fee Issue (not remission) | 66.67% | 0.00% | 33.33% |
| Graduation | 100.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% |
| Fitness to Practice | 100.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% |
| Placement Problems | 100.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% |

**May - August 2025**

Primary issue by study type

| Process | Graduate Coursework | RHD | Undergraduate |
|---|---|---|---|
| Placement Problems | 100.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% |
| Graduation | 80.00% | 0.00% | 20.00% |
| Fitness To Practice/Study | 75.00% | 0.00% | 25.00% |
| Complaint | 70.00% | 0.00% | 30.00% |
| Grievance | 56.67% | 3.33% | 40.00% |
| Enrolment | 52.17% | 0.00% | 47.83% |
| Late Withdrawal | 50.00% | 0.00% | 50.00% |
| NSO Referral | 50.00% | 0.00% | 50.00% |
| Incorrect Advice | 50.00% | 0.00% | 50.00% |
| Academic Misconduct | 44.94% | 0.00% | 55.06% |
| Special Consideration | 43.04% | 0.00% | 56.96% |
| Credit/Advanced Standing | 42.86% | 0.00% | 57.14% |
| Exchange | 40.00% | 0.00% | 60.00% |
| Scholarship | 40.00% | 0.00% | 60.00% |
| Fee Remission | 37.93% | 0.00% | 62.07% |
| SEDS- Equitable Adjustments | 33.33% | 0.00% | 66.67% |
| Supervision | 30.00% | 60.00% | 10.00% |
| Show Cause / Academic Progress | 28.17% | 5.63% | 66.20% |
| Selection Dispute | 20.00% | 0.00% | 80.00% |
| Disallowed Appeal | 20.00% | 0.00% | 80.00% |
| General Misconduct | 18.18% | 0.00% | 81.82% |
| Readmission | 0.00% | 0.00% | 100.00% |
| Visa Issues | 0.00% | 0.00% | 100.00% |
| Leave of Absence | 0.00% | 0.00% | 100.00% |
| Progress RHD | 0.00% | 100.00% | 0.00% |

**May - August 2026**

**Distribution by International/Domestic Status**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Domestic | 342 | 45.36% |
| International | 400 | 53.05% |
| Not Specified | 12 | 1.59% |

**May - August 2025**

**Distribution by International/Domestic Status**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Domestic | 277 | 44.68% |
| International | 332 | 53.55% |
| Not Specified | 11 | 1.77% |

**Students Identifying as Living with a Disability**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Anxiety** | 17 | 18.28% |
| **ADHD** | 42 | 45.16% |
| **Autism/ASD** | 16 | 17.20% |
| **Depression** | 15 | 16.13% |

*Of the 93 students who disclosed a disability (May - August 2026). Disability is a free-text field, and students may name more than one condition*

**May - August 2026**

Primary issue by international or domestic status

| Process | Domestic | International |
|---|---|---|
| **Academic Misconduct** | 46.53% | 52.48% |
| **Academic Progress (Coursework)** | 27.38% | 70.24% |
| **Special Consideration** | 41.46% | 56.91% |
| **Assessment Dispute** | 44.16% | 54.55% |
| **Fee Remission** | 40.74% | 57.41% |
| **Complaint** | 76.67% | 23.33% |
| **Selection and Admission** | 50.00% | 50.00% |
| **General Misconduct** | 30.77% | 69.23% |
| **Academic Progress (Graduate Research)** | 40.00% | 40.00% |
| **Enrolment** | 48.65% | 51.35% |
| **Credit/Advanced Standing** | 50.00% | 50.00% |
| **Graduation** | 0.00% | 100.00% |
| **Supervision Issues** | 36.36% | 63.64% |
| **Fitness to Practice** | 50.00% | 50.00% |
| **Visa Issue** | 0.00% | 100.00% |
| **Fee Issue (not remission)** | 33.33% | 66.67% |
| **GBV Referral** | 84.62% | 7.69% |
| **Legal Referral** | 100.00% | 0.00% |
| **Scholarship Issues** | 0.00% | 100.00% |
| **Subject/Course Advice (Stop 1 referral)** | 50.00% | 50.00% |
| **Placement Problems** | 50.00% | 50.00% |
| **SEDS (Ongoing Support)** | 100.00% | 0.00% |
| **Other** | 47.62% | 47.62% |

**May - August 2025**

Primary issue by international or domestic status

| Process | Domestic | International |
|---|---|---|
| Selection Dispute | 80.00% | 20.00% |
| Credit/Advanced Standing | 80.00% | 20.00% |
| Graduation | 66.67% | 33.33% |
| SEDS- Equitable Adjustments | 66.67% | 33.33% |
| Exchange | 66.67% | 33.33% |
| Grievance | 64.29% | 35.71% |
| Fitness To Practice/Study | 60.00% | 40.00% |
| Special Consideration | 56.83% | 43.17% |
| General Misconduct | 53.85% | 46.15% |
| Incorrect Advice | 50.00% | 50.00% |
| Assessment Dispute | 46.34% | 53.66% |
| Enrolment | 46.15% | 53.85% |
| Show Cause / Course Academic Progress (CAPC) | 45.90% | 54.10% |
| Fee Remission | 42.31% | 57.69% |
| Complaint | 42.11% | 57.89% |
| Scholarship | 40.00% | 60.00% |
| NSO Referral | 40.00% | 60.00% |
| Late Withdrawal | 38.46% | 61.54% |
| Academic Misconduct | 36.64% | 63.36% |
| Progress RHD | 33.33% | 66.67% |
| Placement Problems | 27.78% | 72.22% |
| Supervision | 27.27% | 72.73% |
| Disallowed Appeal | 20.00% | 80.00% |
| Readmission | 0.00% | 100.00% |
| Visa Issues | 0.00% | 100.00% |
| Leave of Absence | 0.00% | 100.00% |

**May - August 2026**

Cases By Faculty

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Science** | 189 | 25.07% |
| **Arts** | 134 | 17.77% |
| **FBE** | 109 | 14.46% |
| **MDHS** | 97 | 12.86% |
| **FEIT** | 80 | 10.61% |
| **ABP** | 50 | 6.63% |
| **MLS** | 23 | 3.05% |
| **MGSE** | 24 | 3.18% |
| **VCA** | 15 | 1.99% |
| **MBS** | 2 | 0.27% |
| **FVAS** | 1 | 0.13% |
| **(unspecified)*** | 30 | 3.98% |

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

**May - August 2025**

Cases By Faculty

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Science | 164 | 26.45% |
| Arts | 112 | 18.06% |
| FBE | 82 | 13.23% |
| FEIT | 70 | 11.29% |
| MDHS | 66 | 10.65% |
| ABP | 35 | 5.65% |
| MGSE | 32 | 5.16% |
| MLS | 29 | 4.68% |
| MSD | 9 | 1.45% |
| VCA | 7 | 1.13% |
| FVAS | 6 | 0.97% |
| FFAM | 5 | 0.81% |
| MBS | 3 | 0.48% |
| Arts | 197 | 31.62% |

**May - August 2026**

**Process by Faculty**

| | Academic Misconduct | Assessment Dispute | Special Consideration | Show Cause/CAPC |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Science** | 25.40% | 12.70% | 18.52% | 12.70% |
| **Arts** | 38.06% | 8.21% | 13.43% | 8.96% |
| **FBE** | 18.35% | 16.51% | 16.51% | 14.68% |
| **MDHS** | 26.80% | 7.22% | 16.49% | 2.06% |
| **FEIT** | 23.75% | 10.00% | 12.50% | 22.50% |
| **ABP** | 26.00% | 4.00% | 26.00% | 12.00% |
| **MLS** | 21.74% | 13.04% | 17.39% | 8.70% |
| **MGSE** | 37.50% | 8.33% | 20.83% | 4.17% |
| **VCA** | 53.33% | 0.00% | 6.67% | 6.67% |
| **MBS** | 50.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 50.00% |
| **FVAS** | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% |

**May - August 2025**

**Process by Faculty**

| | Academic Misconduct | Assessment Dispute | Special Consideration |
|---|---|---|---|
| Science | 36.87% | 25.96% | 37.17% |
| Arts | 28.98% | 37.11% | 33.91% |
| FBE | 35.05% | 39.18% | 25.77% |
| FEIT | 35.99% | 33.12% | 30.89% |
| ABP | 45.59% | 25.96% | 28.45% |
| MDHS | 24.09% | 46.05% | 29.86% |
| MLS | 23.37% | 36.54% | 40.09% |
| MSD | 62.19% | 24.38% | 13.43% |
| MBS | 55.97% | 44.03% | 0.00% |
| FFAM | 100.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% |
| FVAS | 53.57% | 0.00% | 46.43% |
| MGSE | 0.00% | 28.80% | 71.20% |
| VCA | 0.00% | 0.00% | 100.00% |

### Commentary

During this period, the Service assisted 754 students, compared with 620 during the same period in 2025, an increase of 21.61% and almost double the 397 students assisted between January and April. Undergraduates accounted for 58.09% of presentations (54.52% in 2025), graduate coursework students 35.54% (43.71%), and graduate researchers 4.38% (1.77%). International students again comprised the majority of presentations at 53.05% (53.55% in 2025), well above their share of overall enrolment, while domestic students accounted for 45.36% (44.68%). Ninety-three students (12.33%) identified as living with a disability, compared with approximately 8% at the same time last year. Almost two-thirds of those students (64.52%) reported one or more of anxiety, ADHD, autism spectrum disorder or depression, with ADHD the most frequently identified condition (42 students).

Academic misconduct remained the largest area of casework, accounting for 26.79% of presentations, consistent with January to April (25.94%) and up from 19.68% during the same period in 2025. Special consideration matters accounted for 16.31% of presentations (22.90% in 2025), followed by Show Cause (Academic Progress, Coursework) matters at 11.14% (10.16%) and assessment disputes at 10.21% (12.90%). Together, these four categories represented almost two-thirds of all casework (64.46%). As the categories in the new case management system do not align precisely with those used in 2025, year-on-year comparisons should be treated as indicative.

Growth in academic misconduct matters continues to be driven largely by generative AI-related allegations. Gen AI matters accounted for 95 of the 202 misconduct matters during the period (47.03%), compared with 11 during the same period last year. Academic misconduct matters were predominantly undergraduate (63.86%) and were distributed relatively evenly between international (52.48%) and domestic students (46.53%). They were concentrated in the Faculties of Arts and Science, with Arts recording both the highest number of matters (51) and the highest within-faculty rate among the larger faculties (38.06%).

Special consideration matters were more common among undergraduate students (66.67%) than graduate coursework students (31.71%), and international students outnumbered domestic students (56.91% compared with 41.46%). Science recorded the largest number of these matters (35), while the highest within-faculty rates were recorded by the Melbourne School of Design (26.00%) and the Melbourne Graduate School of Education (20.83%).

Students seeking assistance with Show Cause (Academic Progress) matters were concentrated in Science, FEIT, FBE and Arts. FEIT recorded the highest within-faculty rate (22.50%). Most students were undergraduates (59.52%), and international students substantially outnumbered domestic students (70.24% compared with 27.38%).

The four most represented faculties accounted for 70.16% of all casework: Science (25.07%), Arts (17.77%), FBE (14.46%) and MDHS (12.86%). This is broadly consistent with the same period in 2025, when Science, Arts and FBE were also the three most represented faculties.

There remains insufficient longitudinal data to draw firm conclusions about self-identified disability. However, the proportion of students identifying as living with a disability during this period (12.33%) was slightly higher than between January and April (11.59%).

## Public Advocacy Activities

The Service has recently produced the following submissions:

Feedback on Managing Potential Breaches of the Australian Code for Responsible Conduct of Research Procedure- April 2026

Feedback on VC Protest Rules- April 2026

Feedback on Proposed Surveillance Policy- April 2026

The next Advocacy Service report will cover the period September to December 2026 and will be available in mid-February 2027.

Paul Lewis-Hornsby

Team Leader, Advocacy Service

September 2026