

## UMSU Legal Service

### Access and Equity Policy

Policy number: 010	Date adopted: 10.11.2016	
Authorised by: Phoebe Churches, Manager, Advocacy & Legal		
Date last reviewed: 10.11.2016	Reviewed by: A & L SAG	Date of next review: 10.11.2017

<b>Policy context:</b> This policy relates to:	
Standards or other external requirements	
UMSU standards	Intake, Information, Referral & Advice Policy Casework Policy Casework Guidelines File Management Policy Confidentiality Policy
Legislation or other requirements	<u>Legal Profession Uniform Law Application Act 2014 (Vic)</u> <u>Legal Profession Uniform General Rules 2015</u> <u>Legal Profession Uniform Law Australian Solicitors' Conduct Rules 2015</u> <u>Legal Profession Uniform Legal Practice (Solicitors) Rules 2015</u> <u>Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth)</u> <u>Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth)</u> <u>Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)</u> <u>Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)</u> <u>Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)</u> <u>Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)</u>

#### **Background**

The Legal Service embraces the importance of 'access' of its services to **all** students of Melbourne University, irrespective of gender, ethnicity, status, sexuality or socio-economic background. The services offered are free of charge for all currently enrolled students of Melbourne University accessing the Legal Service.

#### **Identifying barriers to access**

In order to identify barriers to access, the Legal Service will:

- compare the profile of service users with Melbourne University population data and past service records on an annual basis to identify any groups who are underrepresented;
- review relevant literature and practice experience;
- consult with service users and/or their advocates, other agencies and staff;
- seek advice from relevant community groups or members

The Principal Solicitor will be responsible for coordinating this process and reviewing the research outcomes as part of the annual planning process and will be responsible for reviewing the effectiveness of physical and cultural access strategies.

#### **Ensuring physical and cultural access**

- Services are provided in as flexible manner as possible to meet the needs of individuals.
- The cultural and language needs of people within the target group/s are identified and accommodated.

- Interpreters or qualified bilingual staff are available for any person requiring this assistance.

**Promotion of service**

The Principal Solicitor will be responsible for developing and reviewing a service promotion and information strategy as part of the annual planning.

The Legal Service will produce information about its services and activities in a range of formats suitable for the full range of people who may need to access them. Such information will be distributed in such ways having regard to resource constraints.

**Practice**

1. The organisation will endeavour to ensure that its services are available to all students of Melbourne University regardless of home campus, internal or external student status, part-time or full time enrolment.

The Service provides legal advice to students:

- By **telephone**, which is available to students between 1.00 p.m. and 4.30 p.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.
- By **correspondence** in the form of letters of advice attached as read-only documents to email, or standard letters.
- **In person**, by appointment only at the discretion of the solicitor with carriage of the matter.

2. The Legal Service will make every effort to provide information to all students of Melbourne University relating to its services and the means by which to access the Service.

3. The Legal Service is aware of the need to provide information in a format which is understood and accessible to students who:

- are culturally and linguistically diverse;
- have a disability.

4. Attending to students’ inquiries by telephone, in person, and/or by correspondence is on a “first in” basis, except in the case of an emergency (e.g. statutory time limits, life threatening issues).

**DOCUMENTS**

Documents related to this policy	
Related policies	Code of Conduct Policy
Forms or other organisational documents	Legal Service Charter
Policy review frequency: Annually	Responsibility for review: A & L SAG
<p>Review process: The Advocacy &amp; Legal Student Advisory Group in conjunction with the Principal Solicitor has responsibility for leading the review of this policy. The process for reviewing the policy includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment of policy implementation to date;</li> <li>• Those covered by the policy are provided with the opportunity to give feedback;</li> <li>• All feedback and suggestions will be considered by the review of the policy;</li> <li>• Proposed changes will be presented to UMSU staff to achieve consensus;</li> <li>• A &amp; L SAG will endorse the finalised policy; and</li> <li>• The policy will be available on the Legal Services web page.</li> </ul>	