



ANUSA Student Assistance Team Report

Quarter 3, 2024 (July-September)

**** Content Warning: our report has mentions of SASH and suicidal ideation****

Overview

This quarter, we have seen an increased number of critical cases, where students have disclosed experiencing SASH, suicidal ideation, domestic violence and self-harm. We have been finding it difficult to find appropriate, reliable and timely services to refer students to following our initial support/contact. The team has been channelling resources into this space to ensure these students are getting the support they need in the initial stages, and will continue to do so. We have had several collaborations with Legal with some of these complex cases.

We have seen a steady demand of students requiring academic support due to the busy exam and appeals period. We had the admin team support us in providing basic advice to students when they are enquiring about appeals, which has been very helpful for our team.

We have provided a record number of grants this quarter (close to \$46,000), which coincides with the busy period. We have the capacity now to assist with the increased number of grant applications due to having Andy on board.

In Q4, we anticipate a continued increase in the usage of our grants and programs due to the busy assessment period.

Casework spotlight areas

This quarter, we have had a busy quarter as it was the end of the semester 1, and also the start of semester 2. The vast majority of issues our students have been facing this quarter are academic issues. This is in line with the time of year; students would have had appeals-related queries, deferred exams, and queries regarding their first few assessments from semester 2. There are still a lot of inconsistencies on how ECAs are being applied at the College level, and we have been doing a lot of advocacy work in that space to ensure students are getting a just outcome from their applications. Most of the time, when students are experiencing academic issues it is due to health-related reasons. We are seeing a similar amount of students coming to us due to health-related concerns (a slight increase of 0.5% from last calculation).

A year on from seeing Postgraduate students, it is clear that postgraduate students are firm in their understanding of us as their student union. Our current breakdown of students is 58.8% undergraduates and 41% Postgraduates. We are still working towards penetrating the HDR space more and are doing various outreach initiatives, such as attending HDR week and being on an HDR panel to ensure HDR candidates are aware of our service. With the help of our admin team, we were able to identify all students who were previously listed as unknown on our database. Thank you admin for assisting us with our search!

We've had an eventful Q3, supporting many long-term students, and we anticipate a heavier workload in Q4 with both new and old students coming to us as we come towards the busy period of exams and ANU shutdown.

Case matter breakdown

Matter	Count	Percentage
Total Matters for 2024	981	100%
Academic Matters	673	68.6%
Disciplinary Matters	23	2.3%
Financial Matters (non-grant)	70	7.1%
SASH	14	1.4%
Health	114	11.6%
Suicidal Ideation	18	1.8%
Accommodation	25	2.5%
Others (incl. Tax help, legal referrals)	44	4.4%

Student cohort breakdown

UG	PG CWR	PG HDR	Unknown	Total
391	221	52	0	664
58.8%	33.2%	7.8%	-	100%

These figures are from Jan 2024 onwards (year to date figures). These are also just the casework numbers. The students who have accessed our financial grants and program are not necessarily captured in this table.

Financial

Q 3 2024

<u>Grant/Program</u>	<u>UG Successful (# and \$)</u>	<u>PGCW Successful (# and \$)</u>	<u>PGHDR Successful (# and \$)</u>	<u>Total Successful</u>
<u>ANUSA Assistance Grant (AAG)</u>	<u>23 / \$9900</u>	<u>19 / \$9490</u>	<u>5 / \$3250</u>	<u>45 / \$22640</u>
<u>ANUSA Medical Grant (AMG)</u>	<u>3 / \$800</u>	<u>6 / \$1465</u>	<u>1 / \$300</u>	<u>10 / \$2565</u>
<u>ANUSA Carers Grant (ACG)</u>	<u>2 / \$1700</u>	<u>4 / \$3600</u>	<u>3 / \$2800</u>	<u>4 / \$8100</u>
<u>Accommodation Assistance Program (AAP)</u>	<u>3 / \$840</u>	<u>1 / \$70</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>4 / \$910</u>
<u>Grocery Voucher Program (GVP)</u>	<u>164 / \$8200</u>	<u>54 / \$2700</u>	<u>5 / \$250</u>	<u>223 / \$11150</u>
<u>Transport Voucher Program (TVP)</u>	<u>19 / \$305.9</u>	<u>15 / \$241.5</u>	<u>4 / \$64.4</u>	<u>38 / \$611.8</u>
<u>Total amount spent</u>				<u>\$ 45,976.80</u>

Grants

We continued to support students facing hardship through our three ANUSA grants: Assistance, Medical, and Carers — as well as our Emergency Accommodation Program. Despite tightening eligibility criteria for some grants and programs to stay within budget, the ongoing cost-of-living crisis has significantly impacted students, increasing the demand for financial aid. In response, we raised the ANUSA Assistance Grant limit to \$750 per semester in July. Common reasons for grant applications include loss of employment, reduced work hours, medical expenses exceeding AMG coverage, and the rising cost of living. Additionally, there has been a notable increase in scams targeting international students, exacerbating their financial struggles. To extend support, the assistance team will review applications from the previous quarter in Q4, ensuring that more students in need can benefit from the recent changes.

The cost of living has resulted in the total amount awarded across all four programs, which doubled the amount from \$22,588 to \$44,876.80.

ANUSA has also launched the Indigenous Well-Being Program aiming to improve the general well-being of Indigenous students, including mental and physical health related costs. There is only 1 applicant so far with the full amount going towards mental health related expenses.

School of Art & Design Financial Hardship Bursary

ANUSA continued to administer the SoAD bursary this quarter. 1 out of 5 applicants studying a School of Art and Design program were granted financial support, with a total of \$303.

Transport Vouchers

These vouchers have continued to be popular this quarter, with 20 transport vouchers distributed to as many individuals. This is a slight decrease from Q1 as some of the eligible students have to wait for semester 2 to re-apply for the program.

Grocery Vouchers

Demand for grocery vouchers declined this quarter. A total of 223 vouchers were provided to students, which is double the amount granted last quarter (April - June 2024). This is consistent with the cost-of-living pressures that students report experiencing.

The students are eligible for 1 grocery voucher per semester (6-month period). Most of the deserving students applied for the grocery voucher in Q1 and were ineligible to apply again in Q2. 98 out of 222 applicants reapplied in this quarter for the semester 2 voucher.

ANU Book Bursary

As this program is focused towards the start of the semester, only 2 applications were processed this quarter. The ANU Scholarship team has closed the bursary due to budgeting. Initiative reviews are needed due to the issues we have encountered, especially given the very limited funding and the low coverage available. One of the applicants also has to wait till week 7 to get their books when they submit the application before the semester starts.

Eun Ju Bursary

ANU Advancement engages with us each year to disburse the Eun Ju Bursary. Eun Ju was a student at the ANU, who has since passed on. This bursary honours Eun Ju's deep care for people by supporting students in difficult times. Information on the Eun Ju bursary can be found [here](#). A recipient for this year's bursary has not yet been identified.

Food Co-op Vouchers

After very high utilisation of food co-op vouchers in previous quarters, we introduced a limit of 5 vouchers per student per annum. This has brought the Food voucher budget under control. The students who were relying on regular use of food vouchers have been provided more resources and information about other ANSUA programs such as BKSS free breakfast, ANUSA grocery vouchers etc. The introduction of BKSS Lunch Express has also helped in managing the use of Food Co-op vouchers. BKSS Lunch Express is a new food rescue initiative piloted by ANUSA. In partnership with Chartwells and Residential Experience, BKSS Lunch Express brings a range of quality meal options to students free of charge every day for lunch. So far \$6540 has been spent on this vouchers.

Equity Tickets

We provided Equity Ticket support for the following:

1. NUS EdCon Equity ticket
2. BIPOC Palestine Fundraiser event equity ticket
3. Psychology Society Ball
4. Science Society Gala

We will continue to provide equity ticket support to all clubs and society as needed.

Academic

Academic matters continue to dominate the SAT space, holding steady at 68% of overall matters. During this time of year, we are seeing students having issues with late enrolments. We have been seeing students who were unable to enrol due to waiting for the outcome of their deferred exam, only for them to miss out on enrolments once their deferred exam results are finalised. We support students in cases like these individually, but these are common issues at this time of the year.

Show cause notices

Show Cause notices came out on the 15th of July and we anticipate some later in August as well, after the conclusion of deferred and supplementary exams from Semester 1 being held between 22-26 July. We have already started assisting a number of students in responding to these notices and anticipate this may increase workload in the late withdrawal space as well, as students seek assistance to retrospectively go under the exclusion threshold of course failures.

ECA issues

We have seen some progress as a result of ANUSA's advocacy towards increasing students' rights with the ECA process. The main achievement has been restoring the ability for students to submit an ECA for a deferred exam, where an unexpected exacerbation of an existing condition occurs, or a new circumstance arises that requires adjustment via ECA.

There is still work to do around the appeals process and other adjustments (supplementary examinations as a possible adjustment, for example) but we are pleased to be able to advise students that they can submit an ECA for a deferred exam where extenuating circumstances arise.

Graduation changes

The changes to both the frequency and timing of graduation ceremonies announced for 2025 onwards caused considerable angst among students. The SAT team responded to numerous enquiries around this issue and how it impacts students. While some minor changes were made around the timing of the now sole ceremony for 2025, this remains a focus for advocacy and we will be alert to its impacts on students.

Late Withdrawal concerns

We are continuing to provide assistance to students with late withdrawal applications, including many students who have sought assistance on late withdrawal applications submitted outside of the 12-month application timeframe. Late withdrawal applications can be submitted in these circumstances, however they require additional documentation attesting to a student's inability to submit within the standard 12-months (and are therefore more challenging to get approved). In many of these more complex cases, students benefit from our advice on what specific terminology is needed in their supporting documentation, as well as scrutinising important details around timelines.

Another key feature of our work with late withdrawals has been continuing to try to educate students on the changes that have occurred in recent months. Many students we have seen have been either entirely new to the late withdrawal process, or have past experience when the processes were more lenient than they are currently. In particular, we have had to emphasise the importance of students outlining their efforts to seek academic adjustments like ECA and extensions etc, as well as the importance of obtaining highly detailed and specific supporting documentation.

Academic integrity

We supported students through Academic Integrity matters quarter, however the matters have moved away from using third party apps like Chegg, to using AI-generated answers. With the rise of the usage of AI in academia, we are seeing more and more students getting caught with using AI. We are seeing more and more course convenors stipulate specifically in their assessment instructions warning students not to use ChatGPT and the like in their work.

HDR uptake

We continued to see a steady amount of HDR students seeking assistance from SAT in Q3. We attended an ANUSA HDR week panel for HDR candidates which was well received. There were many candidates asking questions about how we could help, in particular in the supervisory breakdown space. A few students reached out to us post-panel to continue discussions. We also attended the ANU HDR mini-market day at the Mary Reay Superfloor, where we had a stall during the HDR inductions. We were able to provide candidates with free merch and talk to a few candidates with regard to what we can do for them. We also

took this opportunity to speak to other stakeholders in this space to learn about what they do, so that we can better refer students to other stakeholders if need be.

Accommodation

ANUSA Accommodation Assistance Program

We processed 5 emergency accommodation applications and provided students 20 nights' assistance this quarter.

ANU Accommodation Bursary

SAT is part of the committee that reviews the ANU accommodation bursaries. As part of the committee, we reviewed applications and provided our recommendations on each. We assessed 30 applications this quarter as compared to 32 last quarter.

Disciplinary & Critical cases (**** Content Warning: This section mentions SASH and suicidal ideation****)

Students with a number of appeals and disciplinary cases were assisted by SAT. The majority of these cases relate to forged documents.

At least 8 students with suicide ideation and 6 with SASH matters were assisted. There were some other complex matters with severe mental health conditions, domestic violence, physical assault, Medical Leave Rule cases and financial scams. There were also cases of students accessing online services to apply for ANU processes, such as Late Withdrawal, reducing courses as an international student etc. These online services provided some forged documents to the university which resulted in disciplinary hearings and exclusion of students. We are assisting some of these cases with the appeals process.

Most of these critical cases were complex and required a combination of academic, financial, accommodation support along with referrals to support services on campus and across Canberra.

Other Activities

Exploring case management systems

We are in advanced discussions with some case management system providers to streamline our grant processing and improve our data management.

The grocery voucher program has already been moved to Rubric. We are aiming to deploy a system this year which will be functional by Jan 2025.

Feedback on Late Withdrawal eForm

SAT provided further feedback on the Late Withdrawal eForm in continuation to the discussions with ASQO in Q2.

Skill Up S2 2024

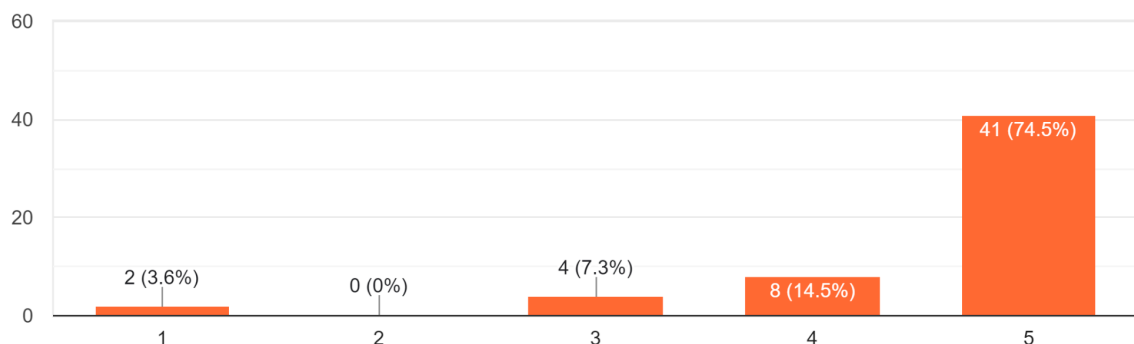
The SAT team organised a new Skill-Up program in Q3. Unlike last time where ANUSA decides what courses students are going to have, applicants this time are allowed to propose their own suggestions. The only requirement is that the applicant has to justify how the program/course would benefit their career or job searching. The great flexibility results in the large number of applications for 155. The most popular programs are coffee related courses, RSA, Work with Vulnerable People card, white card and First-Aid courses. Under our budget limits, there are 35 successful applicants after considering their overall financial situation and motives for applying. SAT have scheduled a survey in a month time to the successful applicants for feedback to this program.

Student Feedback

This year, SAT has also started collecting formal feedback from the student through a feedback form. Almost 90% of the students found support provided by the ANUSA Student Assistance Team to be 'helpful' or 'very helpful'.

Did you find the advice/support from ANUSA Student Assistance Team helpful?

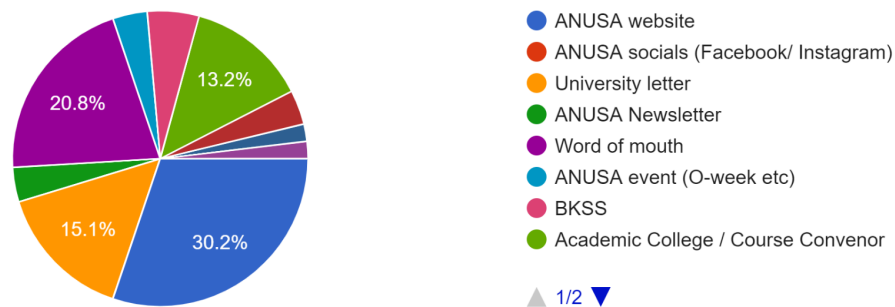
55 responses



Students are finding our service through a combination of different channels.

How did you hear about our service?

53 responses



Some of the general feedback on the SAT service included:

- Fast & Excellent services
- The ANUSA service is great for supporting students. For example, I met an ANUSA advisor with an issue and he was extremely helpful and understands the issue very well and can provide all possible outcomes with all possible solutions. ANUSA also helps you with writing an appeal or if you need to speak to a lawyer they arrange an appointment for you. I highly recommend all students to talk to ANUSA not just if you have an issue but also you can contact them for an advice. It is a really helpful service and as I'm student I'm so grateful for ANUSA and their tremendous support and help.
- They are so helpful!
- Highly commended ANUSA for their prompt and timely response and approval to my application. Their requirements were very precise and clear. Appreciate all you have done to help me during this difficult times in caring for my family.
- ANUSA provided me with very warm and practical help. They are friendly, professional, and actively follow up on issues.

Some Wins

Email from a student on 3rd July

Thank you for accompanying with me to handle with my deferred exam application. I am very sorry to take up you too much time. I have received the approved outcome of FINM7008 from ECA, and waiting for the other course outcome. At now, I have relieved my pressure.

You are kindness and patient, I am glad to meet you.

Email from a student on 8th July

Great News! My appeal of the ECA was approved and I have been granted a deferred exam which is the best possible outcome.

Thank you very much for all your help. I was struggling reading procedures and trying to work out the best path forward and my meetings with you were invaluable in working out how to proceed and this outcome.

Email dated 27th August

“Hi Hassan,

I hope this email finds you well.

I wanted to take a moment to express my sincere gratitude for the detailed feedback you provided on my draft last time. Your suggestions were incredibly helpful, and I have successfully submitted my work. Additionally, I was able to reduce two courses, which has significantly lightened my academic load—something that is very important to me at this time.

I truly appreciate your support and guidance, and I am very grateful for the positive impact it has had on my studies.”

Email dated 11th September:

“Hi Hassan,

Thank you for your assistance with this issue.

I have received the results of the academic inquiry and the results are that there was no breach of academic integrity.”

Email dated 19/09

Dear Emily,

I am very grateful that you have been by my side during my more difficult times, it really warms my heart!

I received a reply and was granted a two-day extension. Theoretically, I just need to upload the photos by 5 pm on Saturday. Finally, some good news!

Email dated 20/09

“Dear Emily,

I wanted to take a moment to express my sincere gratitude for your assistance with these matters. Your support has been immensely helpful, and I truly appreciate the time and effort you’ve taken to help.

Thank you once again for your ongoing guidance.”

Emailed dated 20/09

Hi Emily,

Thank you so much for all of your help with walking me through the process and drafting my application with me – I really really appreciate it and I definitely could not have done it without you!

Emailed dated 25/09

Thank you for such quick processing of my application and for the information included in the email. I can confirm that I have already received the payment.

My sincere thanks to ANUSA, especially the SA assistance team for this support.

Emailed 30/09

Good morning Emily,

Thank you (and the team) very much for your help, I checked my result and it was a D.

If you would like, I can send over the email - otherwise I just wanted to voice my appreciation again for the support :)

Emailed date 25/09

Dear Andy,

Thank you for the information. I have checked and can confirm that the transfer is successful. I received the money.

Thank you for the whole team for helping the process.

Email 6/9:

Thanks Casey for your help, I really appreciate you being there even though this has dragged out for almost a year now.

Email 12/8:

First, thank you so much for your professional and enthusiastic assistance last week. I truly appreciate it.

Email 23/8:

Good Afternoon, Casey,

I have received an email response from the Academic Progress team yesterday regarding the outcome of my show cause appeal. I was extremely happy to find that ANU has allowed me to continue my study.

I would like to offer my sincere gratitude towards all the help you have given me during this rough period of time. I came to meet you today in the ANUSA building but I was told that you were not in at the moment. I will come next week whenever you are free to share this good news with you in person. Once again, I would like to thank you for all the support and guidance you have given me.

Email 26/9:

Hi Casey,

Thank you so much for providing such detailed suggestions. I found them to be precise and really helpful. I'll refine my statement and documentation according to your advice.

Thanks again for your warm help throughout this process. Wishing you a wonderful weekend ahead! 😊

Email 9/8:

Thank you so much for your reminder. You are incredibly meticulous and thoughtful, and it's truly reassuring to have your help.

Email 15/8:

Dear Casey,

Thank you for your prompt and supportive response. I truly appreciate the assistance and the options you've provided.

Email 23/9:

Hi Casey,

I hope you are doing well.

I am just writing to express my gratitude over the past months, it has been a tough time, but I could not survive without your support. So thank you very much for your time and efforts.

I am leaving next Tuesday for China, so just want to send you a thankful message before I go.

Community connections, networking and training

Presentations & Panels

- How to Adult presentation during Bush week
- Presented at DSA's Spoon week event with the legal team.
- Staffed HDR mini services fair - 2nd September
- ANUSA HDR Week panel event

Community connections:

- Met Rizwan Khan from Student Life - discussed First Year program and potential collaboration.
- Joined the panel at ISD alumni event.
- Participated in ACTforCommunity campaign launch organised by ACTCOSS.
- Caught up with Edan (HDR officer) and discussed the draft ANU HDR wellbeing report prepared by the office of Pro Vice-Chancellor Graduate Research.
- Participated in a DSA Spoon week event.
- Spoke to Tom and Alisha from the Libraries about potential outreach in the libraries.
- Met Andrew Coulter from Tjabal centre to discuss the launch of ANUSA indigenous wellbeing program.

Training

- Induction for Andy
- In-house Research Award Rule (HDR) training session
- Critical case management by ISANA - attended by HR,EY & CW on 24th September.
- Hassan attended the Student voice symposium on 20th September with Eleanor.

Future goals and focus areas

- Focus on data management
 - Better feedback collection from students
 - Deploying the new case management system
- SEN Conference
 - Network with professionals in similar roles and exchange ideas.

- Learn best practices in Australia and internationally in providing frontline services.