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ANUSA Legal Service (CLC) And In-House Legal 2024 Report

Overview

The ANUSA Legal Service is run by ANUSA as a community legal centre accredited with Community Legal Centres Australia (the peak Australian body for CLCs). The service supports ANU students and ANU student clubs and societies with their legal needs. It offers face to face and online appointments and additional support, where within the resources of the service. The service also undertakes community legal education and information sessions such as during O-Week, Migration Workshops and Migration Mondays.

Also, during the year, the service was successful in securing a grant from the ACT Law Society to support the hiring of an additional lawyer for six months. A new lawyer has been recruited and will start their role from February 2025. In addition to direct service to students, the ANUSA legal team also supports ANUSA's own need for in-house legal advice.

This report is in three parts. The first section provides a narrative of the ANUSA Legal Service during 2024. The second part provides full statistics in graphical form. Finally, student written feedback is provided (where students have given permission for it to be included in reports).

As in previous years, feedback was collected from students on how they experienced the ANUSA Legal Service with 231 students responding to the question. On a scale of 1 to 10, 82.3% of students responded with 10 to the question of how likely were they to recommend the service to other students, a further 10% responded with a 9.

2024 was a very busy year and as in previous years, service provision increased. Overall legal matters dealt with increased from 833 to 957.

Following opening of service to postgraduates in 2023, 2024 continued to see a very high uptake from postgraduates. About 36% of clients were postgraduate coursework students, about 30% were higher degree research students and about 34% were undergraduates. International students represented 79% of students seen by the service.

The service supported students with a total of 767 student client matters, an increase from 2023 of 716 student client matters. In 2024 in-house caseload (that legal advice direct to ANUSA) represented about 17% of matters (an increase on 2023).

In addition to online booking facilities, student enquiries for legal services were also supported by the ANUSA admin team who responded walk in requests for appointments, phone calls and email enquiries from students. 1486 appointments were booked, including cancelled appointments (many of which represented rescheduling) and no shows. Actual appointments during the year were 902.

Since May statistics have been collected of the period between when the student made the appointment and when it occurred. This 'wait time' statistic includes both the availability of appointments and availability or preference of the students. Median wait times during the year was 6 days, with average wait time 6.03 Days.

Migration and visa advice was about 54% of caseload (compared to 55% for 2023), with tenancy and accommodation related matters the next category at about 15% (compared to 17% for 2023).

Staffing for the legal service remained (as in 2023) at 2.6 FTE lawyers.

The service provided a range of "value added" services to students, which are described below. These are services that extend beyond a single advice session.

The statistical report includes a full overview of feedback, including student comments (where the student has given permission for the feedback to be used). In addition to giving a sense of how students experience the service, where possible, the feedback is used to consider how we can make the service better.

Staffing: During 2024 the legal service was supported by a part-time principal lawyer (0.6 FTE) and two full-time lawyers. The work of the ANUSA Legal Service is also supported by three administrative staff who job share the admin role (0.5 FTE in respect of legal work).

Systems: Students were offered both face to face and online appointments. Students can book an appointments using the online booking system which is accessible through the ANUSA website, 84% of bookings were for online meetings (compared to 82% for 2023), with the remainder face to face meetings. Microsoft Teams was used as the online meeting platform. Students are offered the possibility of translation through the government provided TIS service, (which is not available for visa related matters). Students are also welcome to bring a support person to appointments.

Areas of Law: The table below provides further a detailed breakdown of areas of law for which students sought legal assistance.

Areas of Law	Proportion
Administrative Law	1.7%
Associations Law	0.4%
Associations Law (uninc)	1.0%
AVO	0.7%
Consumer Law	1.3%
Criminal Law	1.4%
Defamation	0.5%
Discrimination Law	0.8%
Employment Law	5.5%
Family Law	
General Commercial	3.0%
Intellectual Property	3.1%
Migration & Citizenship	21.8%
Miscellaneous	0.3%
Motor Veh Property	0.8%
Negligence	1.7%
Occupancy	5.1%
Personal Injury	
SASH	0.5%
Tenancy	8.9%
Traffic & Parking	1.7%
Visa	39.7%

Demographic Data: The voluntary demographic information collected by ANUSA during 2024 and represents 462 responses from 767 student matters for the same period.

The demographic data provided by students indicates the following.

- International students represented about 78% of the case load during the period.
- Around 66% of the student caseload was postgraduates. HDR represented about 30% and Postgraduate Coursework students represented about 36%. About 34% of student caseload was undergraduate students.
- Around 55% of students lived off campus, 43% were on campus and 2% were outside Australia at the time of their appointment.
- Clients were well spread across all ANU Colleges and across years of study progression.
- Clients were most likely to find the service online (around 36%). About 26% heard about the service through word of mouth. 14% of clients were referred to the ANUSA Legal Service by another service. About 5% of students heard of the service through ANUSA promotions. Around 19% were previous clients.

- Students were asked whether they belonged to particular underserved groups, such as those represented by the ANUSA Departments. Significant uptake can be seen by linguistically or culturally diverse students, LGBTQI+ students, women, students with disabilities and students identifying as financially disadvantaged.
- Overwhelmingly (around 80%), students stated that they would not be able to afford legal advice if required to pay for it. A further 17% responded “maybe” to this question. Only 3% thought they could afford to access legal advice on a fee paying basis.

The graphs at the end of this report provide a high-level view of the flow of work during the course of the year and the primary areas of law covered, as well as demographic information provided by students.

Some observations can be drawn from the 2024 data include:

1. International students are the primary users of the ANUSA Legal Service.

- A significant majority of respondents (approximately 76%) identified as international students, indicating a higher reliance on the service compared to domestic students.

2. Migration & Visa issues are the most pressing legal concern for students, particularly for HDR students, but legal needs vary by cohort.

- Over half of the respondents sought assistance with Migration & Visa related matters, highlighting the complexities and potential vulnerabilities international students face in navigating immigration laws.
- Tenancy/Accommodation and Employment issues are also significant areas of concern, indicating challenges students face in their living arrangements and work environments.
- HDR students saw the service more frequently in relation to visa related issues and intellectual property. Undergraduate students tended to have broader legal needs than other categories of students (and were more likely than other categories to seek advice on employment law). Postgraduate coursework students tended to have greater needs in relation to tenancy and accommodation issues.
- As would be anticipated international students have a much higher need for advice in relation to migration and visa (representing around 67% of caseload for them). Domestic students were much more likely to see the service about employment and intellectual property issues.
- Although at low percentages students who identified as belonging to one or more vulnerable groups may have seen the legal service in relation to discrimination, as compared to students who did not so identify. A similar situation applies to SASH related enquiries, with students identifying as belonging to a vulnerable group, twice as likely to identify the issue.

3. The Web and Word of mouth were the most effective channels for students to discover the ANUSA Legal Service.

4. A large majority of students relying on the ANUSA Legal Service have limited financial capacity to pay for legal fees.

The ANUSA Legal Service supports a diverse student population, particularly international students, with a significant need for assistance in visa related and other matters. The service's accessibility is crucial given the financial constraints faced by the majority of its users.

There are significant differences in legal needs between the undergraduate and postgraduate cohorts. These are summarised below but also illustrated in the statistical charts.

Appointments

Students could, if they wished, see lawyers more than once about a particular matter or could see lawyers about new legal enquiries. During the year lawyers assisted students at 902 separate appointments. For a further 29 scheduled appointments, the student failed to attend.

Client Feedback

During 2024, the ANUSA Legal Service continued to receive very high satisfaction ratings from students, with 83.1% of students giving the service 10/10 on likelihood of recommending the service to other students. A further 9.8% gave the service 9.

As in previous years, written comments provided by clients continued to reflect a very high level of client satisfaction with the service provided. These appear at the end of the statistical report.

82% gave the service 5/5 in terms of ease of making an appointment.

63% gave the service 5/5 in respect of wait time until an available appointment.

86% gave 5/5 for usefulness of legal advice.

87% gave 5/5 for understandability of legal advice.

93% gave the service 5/5 for cultural appropriateness and accessibility.

Client feedback is included in the attached statistical report.

In both written and numeric feedback, the area of wait times was a clear area for improvement indicated by clients. Reducing wait times would require increased staffing. See Figures 21-25.

Community Legal Education (CLE)

In addition to providing direct legal advice the service also provided community legal education.

The Migration Workshop and the Deep Dive 485 workshops were attended by 220 students during the year. Areas covered in the workshop included the 485 visa, permanent skilled visas and the partner visa, with the greatest demand for information about the 485 and permanent skilled migration. Most students were primarily interested in the migration workshop and in skilled migration with a smaller proportion interested in partner visas.

17 Students attended Migration Monday drop in sessions (from 21 October to 2 December 2024)

Other community legal education included legal training provided to ANUSA Executives and ANUSA Departments and employees, 'how to adult sessions' provided during O-Week which covered primarily tenancy and employment law and discrimination law sessions hosted in collaboration with ANUSA Departments. The ANUSA Legal team also supported induction for executives of student clubs.

The legal team alongside SAT presented at the International Student Induction, covering ANUSA's services and how to make bookings with our respective teams.

The legal team also presented at a Community Legal Centres (CLC) networking event which introduced our service to the wider CLC community in Canberra and how to refer students onto us.

Value-Added Services

"Value added" services of the ANUSA Legal Service refers to services that cannot be provided within the space of an initial client appointment. While we aim to ideally empower students to be able to manage a legal problem based on advice during that session, that outcome is not always possible for complex legal matters, particularly if the student is in a vulnerable situation which affects their ability to deal with the issue. Such value-added services then become critical to students being able to move forward.

Often provision of value-added services has required providing students with follow on appointments, or in particularly complex matters assisting students over many months. We offer all students follow-on appointments as a default, although most matters are resolved in a single appointment.

During 2024, the legal team assisted with more 50 value-added matters.

This included:

- Assisting students to report a criminal offence by accompanying them to a police
- assisting a student with an ACAT interim application for a tenancy matter involving sexual harassment
- attending an ACAT mediation for a student involved in a motor vehicle accident
- advocating to the Registrar in relation to a disability discrimination matter
- assisting a student in obtaining a sentencing transcript for their upcoming disciplinary hearing
- drafting ACAT applications, supporting or representing students in ACAT with tenancy related disputes
- reviewing pay guides for employment matters,
- attending a lawyer meeting with a student for a potential class action in employment
- reviewing Genuine Temporary Entrant statements for student visa applications
- assisting a student with obtaining ECOE from university after the university locked them out of systems.
- Negotiating consumer law and other disputes
- Appearing as amicus in court cases affecting students
- Advocating for students experiencing discrimination on public transport

- Helping students prepare legal documents for legal cases
- Assisting students to recover bond
- Assisting in resolving dispute with a major retail
- Obtaining an apology for a student in a discrimination complaint
- Helping students recover employment entitlements
- Helping student show they were not at fault in a motor vehicle claim

Referrals and Conflicts

Part of the case load managed by the service is 'referrals' where the service has not been able to assist students and referred them elsewhere. Over 130 students were referred to other legal services or providers.

Michael Curtotti

Principal Lawyer

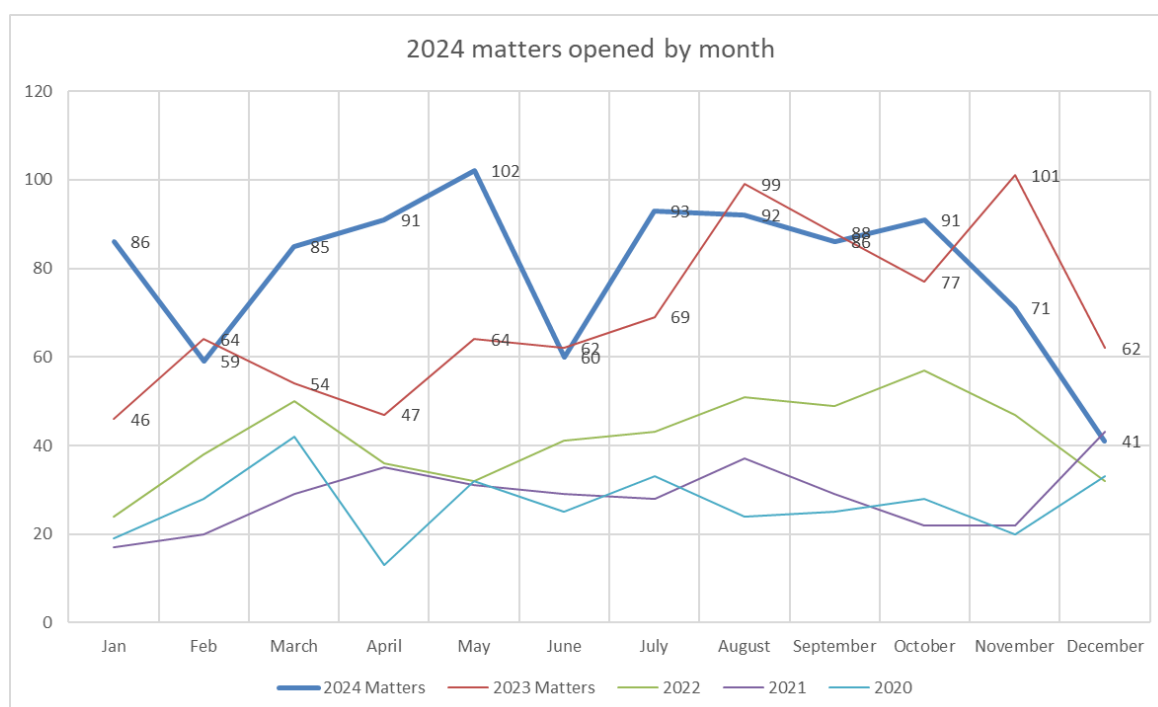
ANUSA Legal Service

June 2025

LEGAL SERVICE STATISTICAL REPORT 2024

The following diagram shows the overall number of matters or files created on a monthly basis. Each matter represents a discrete provision of legal advice to a client, or substantial other task (e.g. community legal education, practice management etc). As is evident the service has managed a significantly increased workload during the year.

Figure 1:



Voluntary Demographic Survey Data Provided by Clients

The diagrams below represent voluntary survey data provided by clients as part of the ANUSA Legal Service intake process during 2024.

Figure 2:

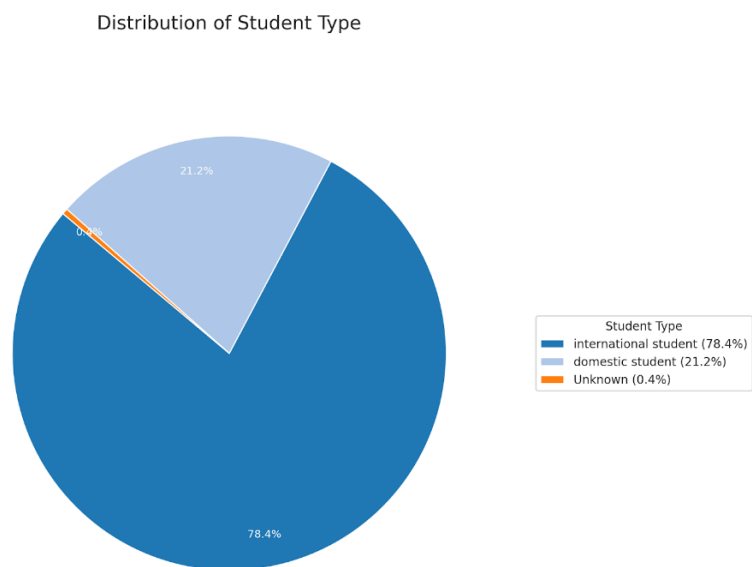


Figure 3:

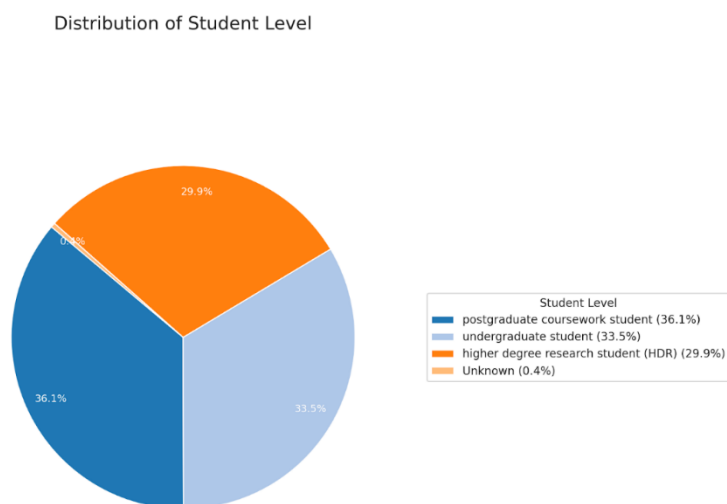


Figure 4:

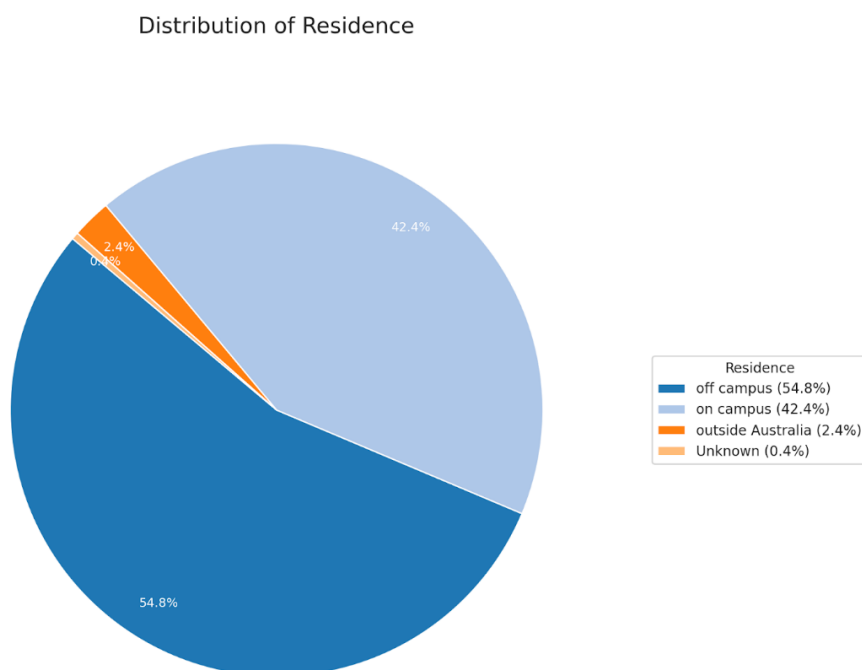


Figure 5:

Distribution of Legal Matter Type

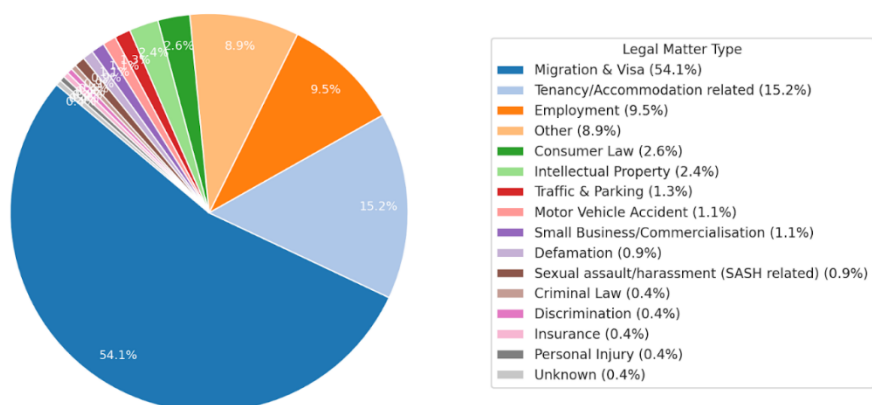


Figure 6:

Distribution of Academic College

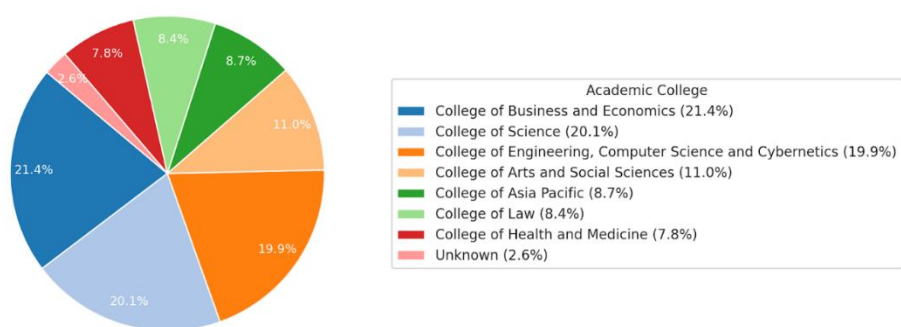


Figure 7:

Distribution of Year of Study

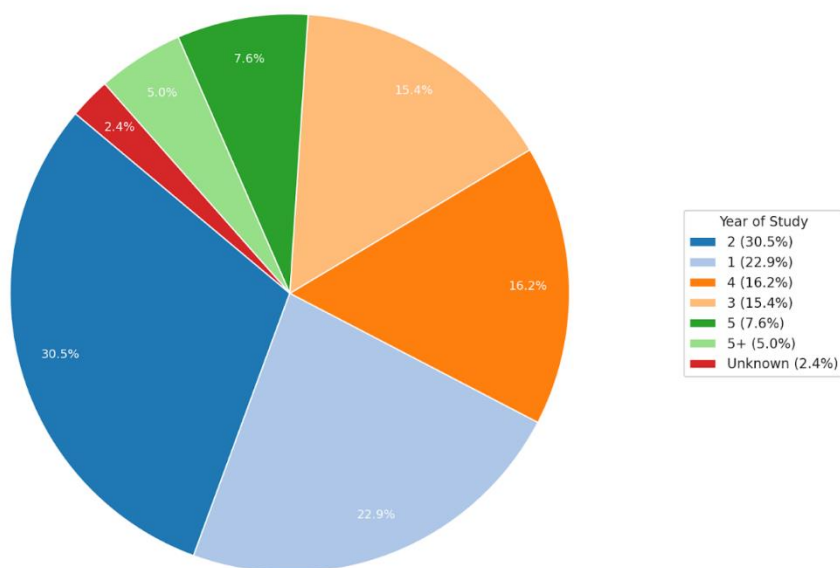
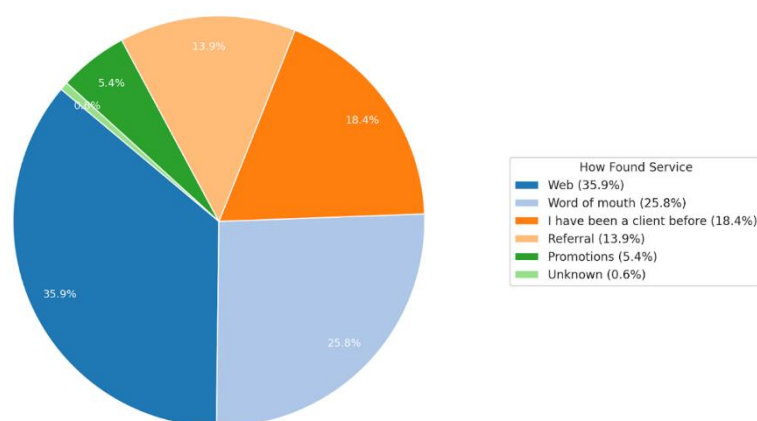


Figure 8:

Distribution of How Found Service



Underserved Communities

(respondents can belong to multiple categories)

(NB: From previous statistics about 50% of the ANUSA case load should be women. The manner in which the question is asked is the likely reason only 26% select the category 'a woman, woman-aligned, experiencing gender oppression as a result of being a woman'.)

Figure 9:

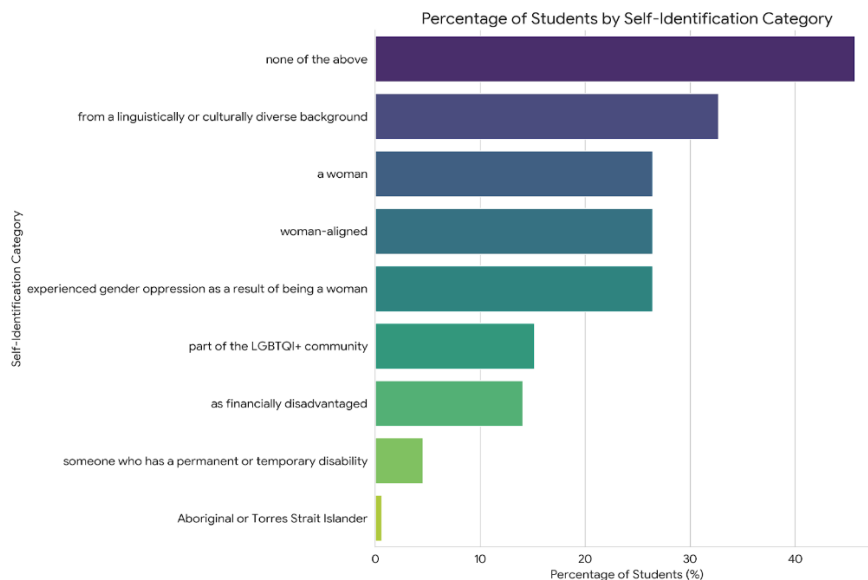
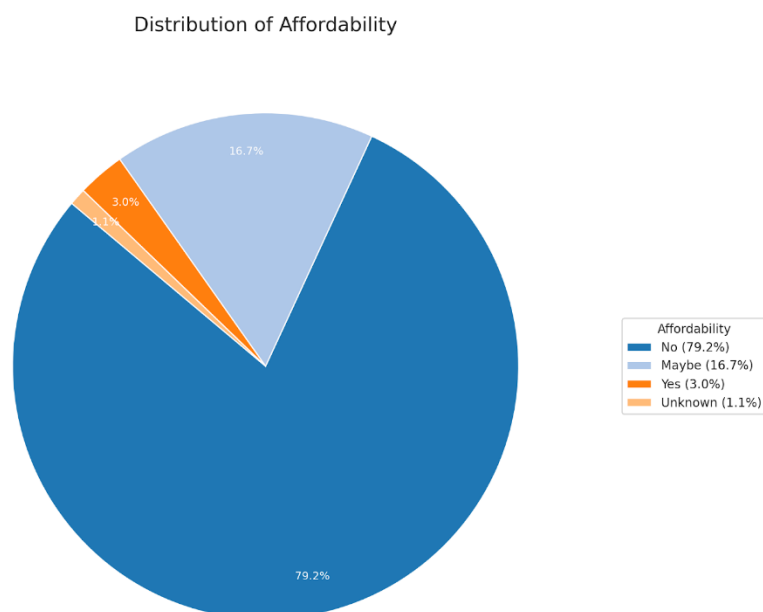
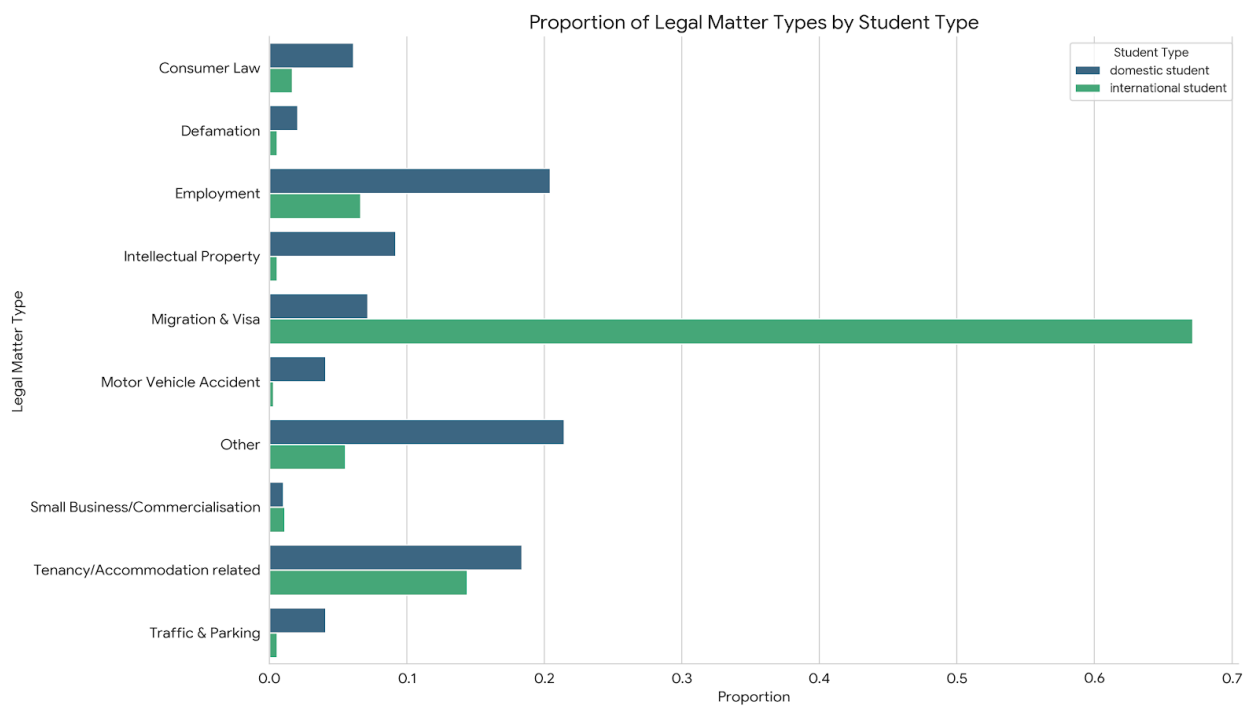
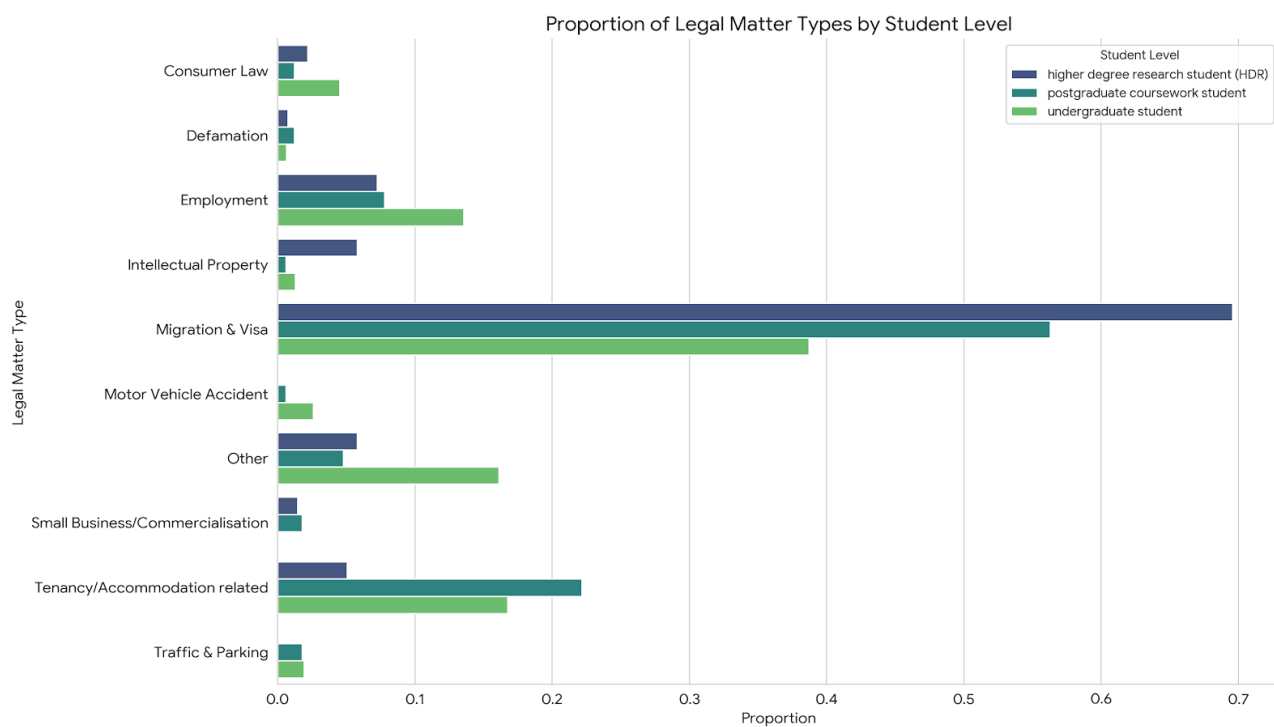


Figure 10:



Breakdown by Student Cohorts

Figure 11.



Areas of Law

Figure 11:

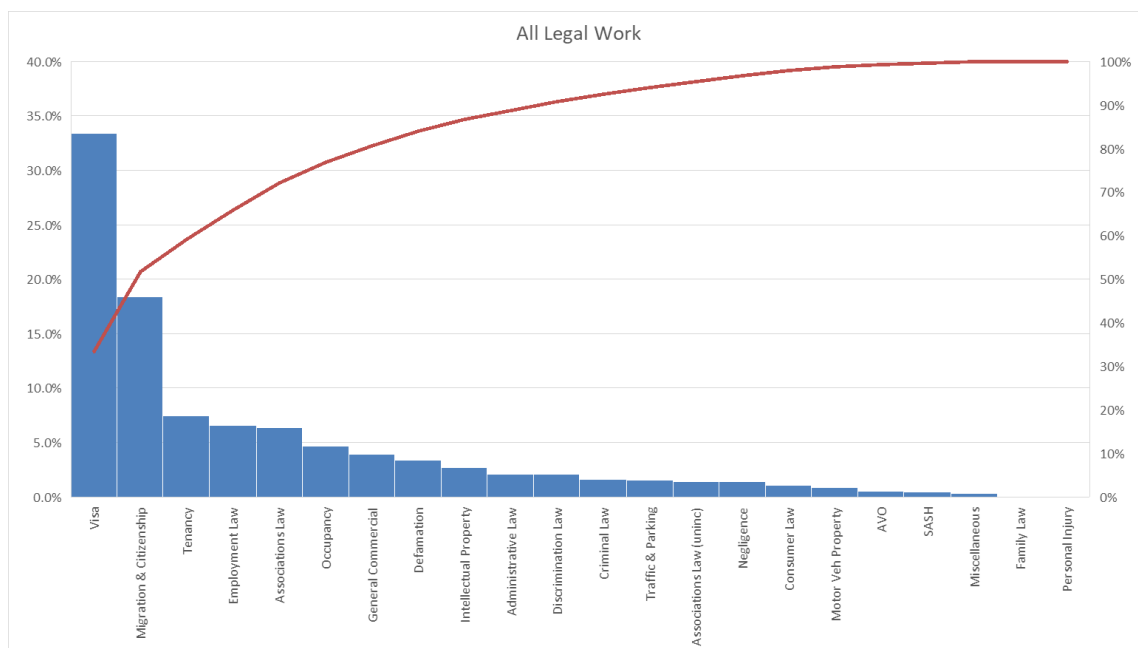
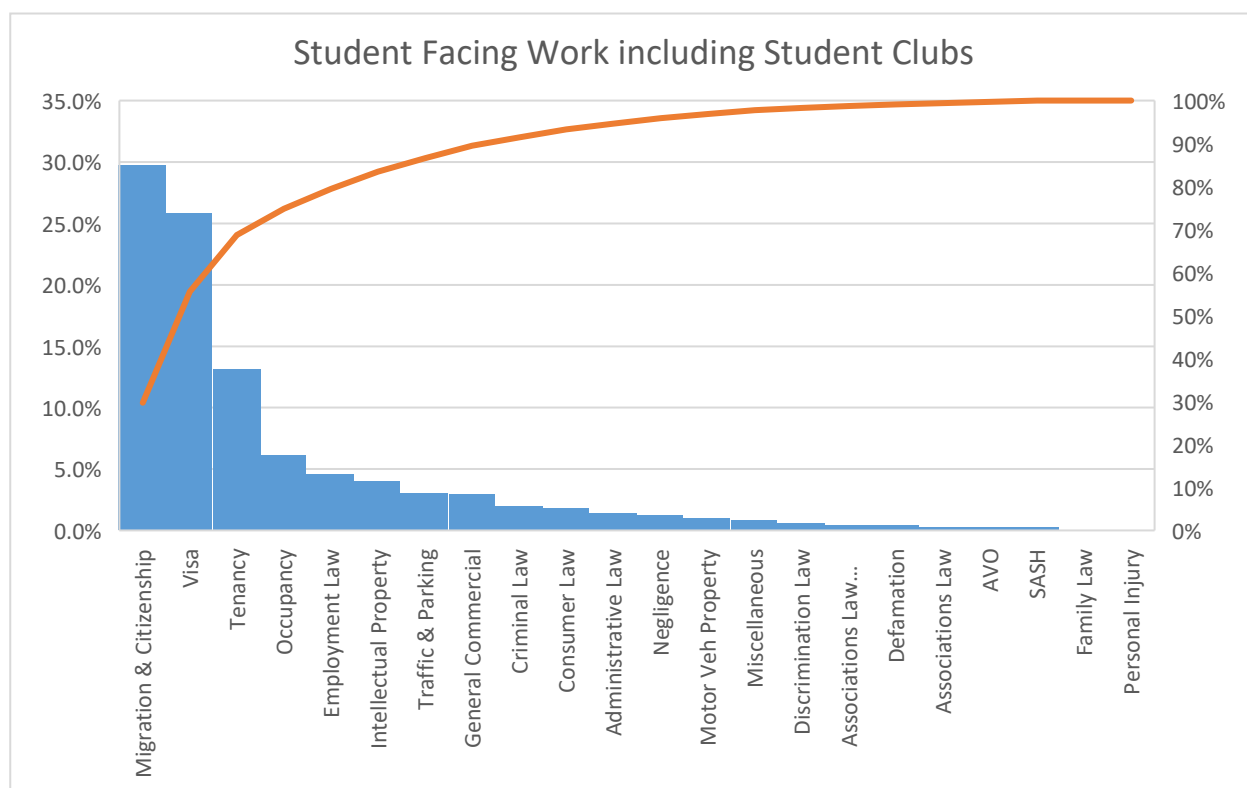


Figure 12:



Client Feedback Statistics 2024

All clients are provided with the opportunity to provide feedback on their experience with the ANUSA Legal Service. The statistics below were provided in response to a question which asked the respondent to indicate their level of satisfaction from low to high, with “5” or “10” indicating highest level of satisfaction (depending on the scale used). 232 responses were received in the period for these statistics for 767 student facing matters (representing 30% of the client cohort).

For the following metric, the average response was 9.69, the median response was 10.

Figure 13:

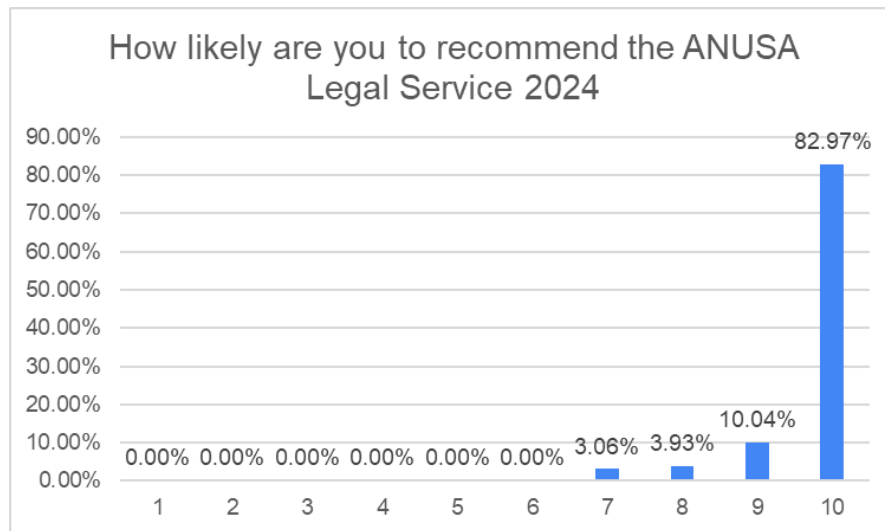


Figure 14:

Average response for the following metric was 4.75, median was 5.

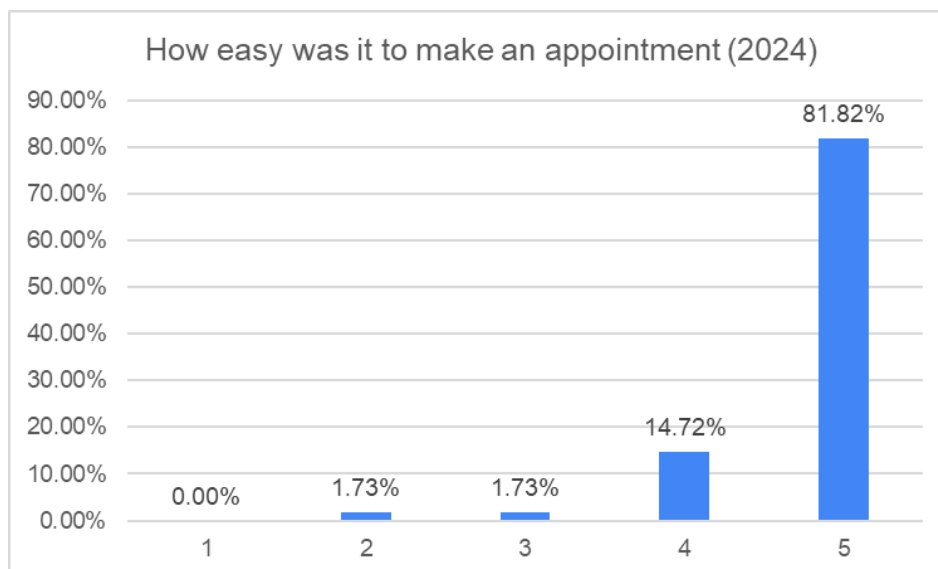


Figure 15:

The following diagram shows how long students waited for an appointment. The The column on the right should be read as “10 or more days”. The median wait time was 7 days.

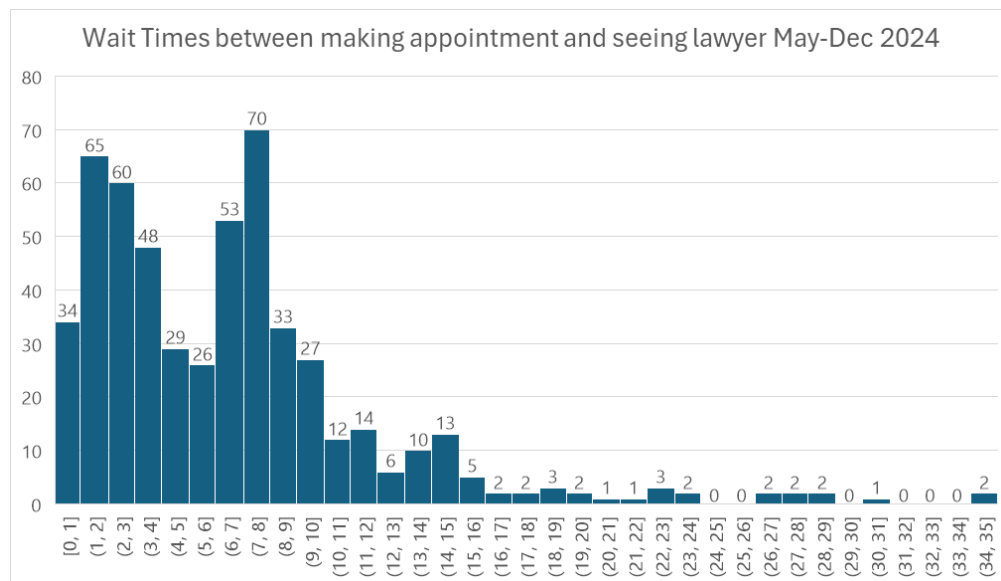


Figure 16:

The diagram below shows the appointment wait times chronologically from May to December 2024. The line indicates a seven day moving average. Wait times were brought down from about September/October 2024. Some students preferred to make appointments at a later time, and thus the figures also incorporate time to suit the students convenience.

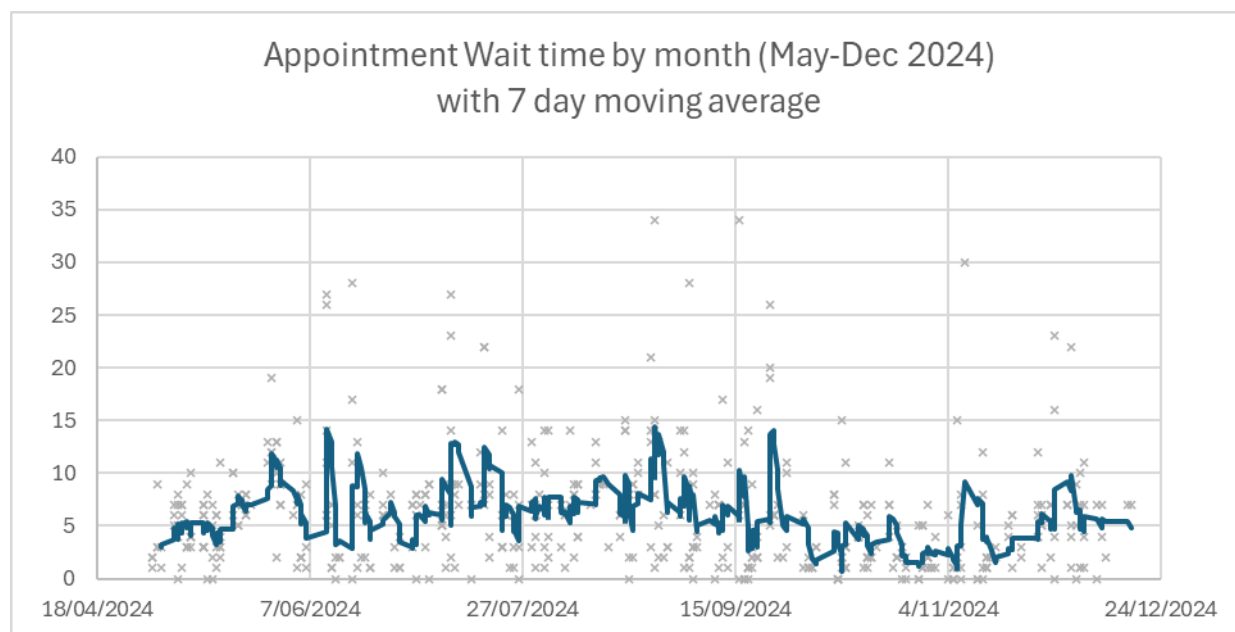


Figure 17:

The average for the following metric was 4.34, the median was 5. Although this metric is consistently the area of lowest performance, the figure improved over 2023.

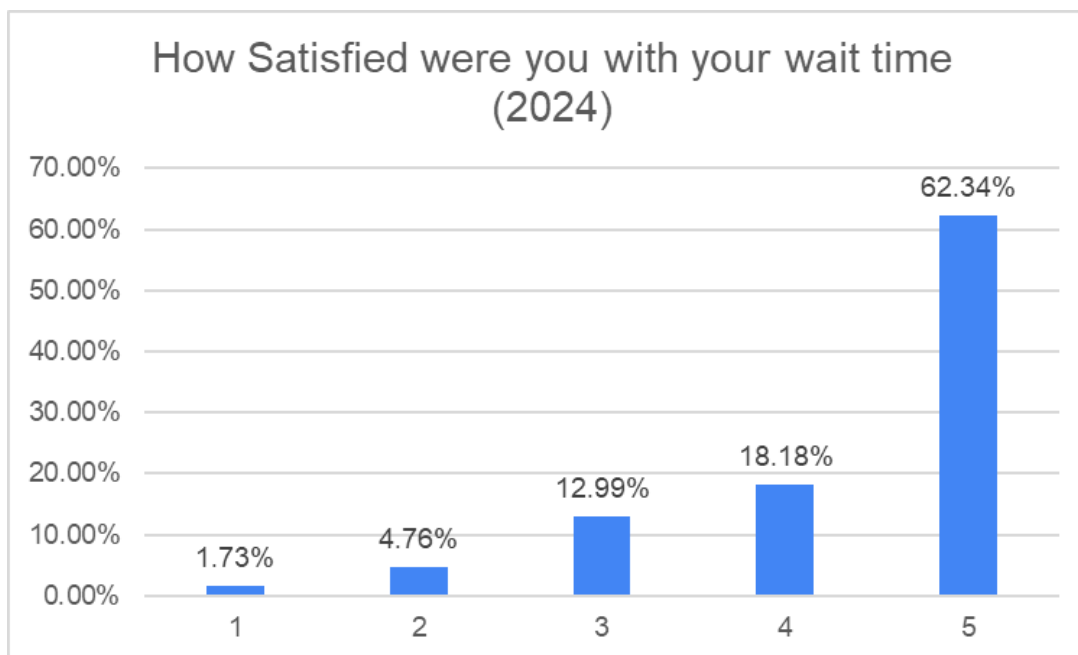


Figure 18:

The average for the following metric was 4.83. The median was 5.

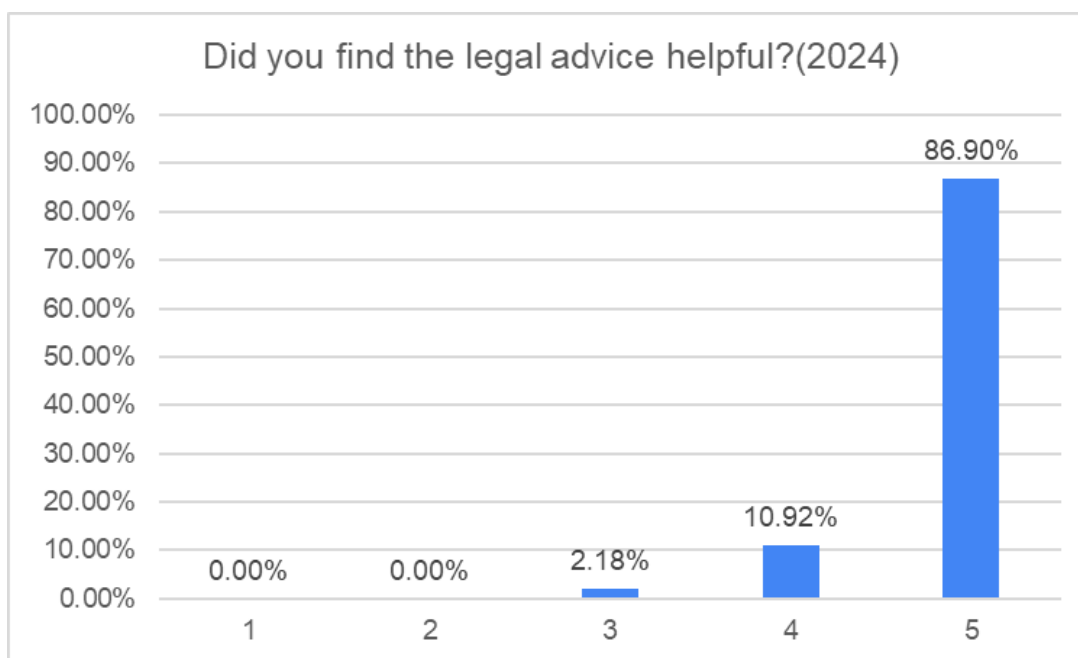


Figure 19:

The average for the following metric was 4.86. The median was 5.

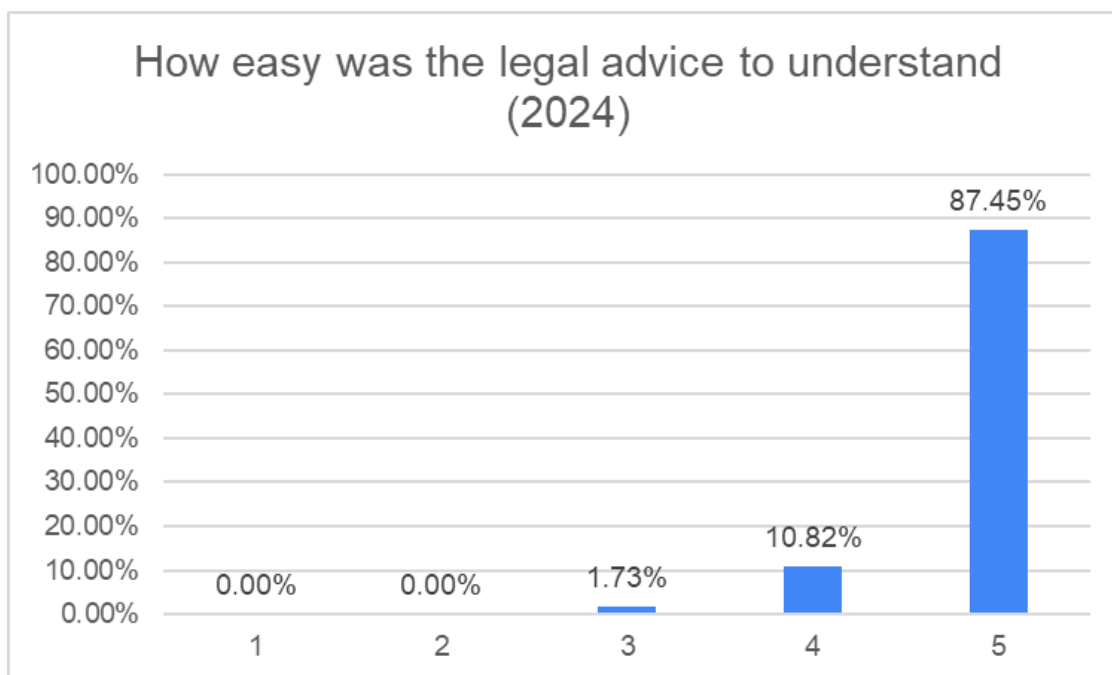
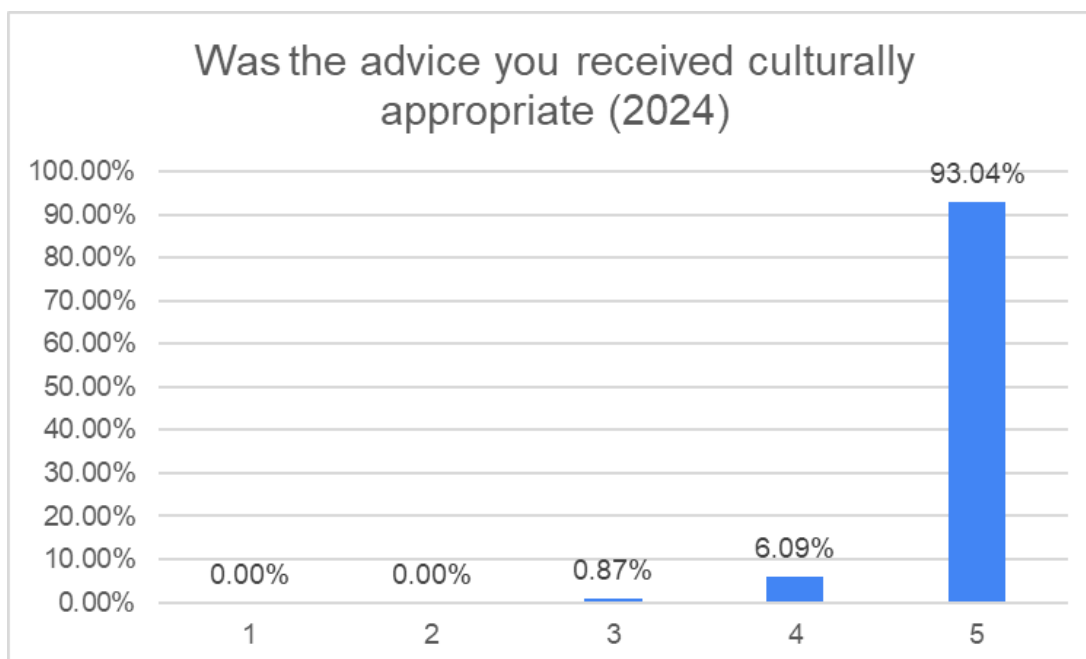


Figure 20:

The average for the following metric was 4.9 and the median was 5.



Client Written Feedback 2024

The following is written feedback provided to the ANUSA Legal Service by clients during 2024, where the client has provided consent for the feedback to be shared. Feedback is sought from all clients shortly after initial appointment. Each entry is feedback from a separate client for a separate service. Student feedback is used during planning to consider any changes we can make to make the service better.

Kat is an amazing lawyer, very punctual, helpful and empathetic. Only feedback for ANUSA would be to continue providing some level of support to recent graduates too. as this population can fall through the cracks and are vulnerable; in some ways more than students, who have support from the university & associated services.

She was so kind and professional during the whole meeting, I like her service and it was quite helpful for me.

In my rental crisis situation I found ANUSA legal advisor as a very helpful guide to support me on my way of decision to stay in the property. I highly appreciate her advices.

Nope - advice was clear and concise, clearly outlined my rights, helped me understand my problem from a legal perspective and left me feeling confident about my current situation- thank you Kat

Promote the legal services more so students are more aware of their rights and ability to access legal aid at ANU.

Please do some migrational/ PR application processing help

Lawyers went above and beyond to help me with my PhD Research Agreements and Intellectual Property. Kind, friendly and willing to think outside the box to accomodate my specific circumstances. Highly recommend

Amazing resource, take advantage of it if needed!

Kathryn is the absolute best, she made me understand the various visa pathways and really helped me.

This is a very useful service. I wasn't aware just how expensive a legal consult with a private attorney would have been, so this is definitely a great service provided to students. I greatly appreciate this access to legal advice.

Very useful service provided.Helped me a lot in navigating the visa related doubts.

nice

Had a lovely experience - our issue seems much clearer now and we have next steps planned!

Michael is great and very clear.

You helped me developing a complete road map for further action regarding my case. Thank you so much!

It seems better if the confirmation email after booking can include the specific time and location.

I didn't receive a confirmation email and text beforehand...maybe it'd be better if this could be fixed in the future.

I am very happy with the services I received.

I really like Kathryn Lee. She is nice and approachable. If she could speak a bit slower in demonstration, that would be better

The service was very efficient and professional and the solutions came with clarity. I am really grateful that ANUSA has made this service accessible to students with their excellent service and quick turnaround time.

Quick and easy appointment.

Everyone should use it to be able to be sound about the visa information

Kathryn was absolutely brilliant. She provided all necessary information and beyond. Her work ethics and openness are immaculate. She answered all of my questions and she provided assistance with everything that I was having trouble with with.

Love Kat! Thanks for explaining everything well and answering all my questions xx

It was very helpful and I feel much more comfortable and confident signing my student agreement now!

Professional and kind

I had a meeting with Michael for immigration purposes and it was extremely helpful and fruitful, far better experience than with the migration agents I have contacted prior to that. Michael was already well prepared on the topic based on the informations I provided and offer great guidance and different strategies to navigate my situation. Thanks, I am extremely appreciative!

Thank you for the range of perspectives and reflections you brought to my queries.

Give the lawyer a raise :D

It was good and useful

Kathrynn Lee is amazing! And so friendly! I felt super comfortable—my session with her was smooth, easy and comprehensible given my complicated legal situation.

Kathryn was amazing!

Nothing specific. I found it very helpful. Ma'am was really kind and understanding. Students should seek legal advice because we may not be aware of many rules and regulations in a new country. Taking legal advice can definitely provide you with the right guidance.

I wish it is easier to book and change an appointment. The booking website/system frequently experiences backend issues (Error 503 Backend Fetch failed).

Kathryn is very patient and helpful

Kai, who has been exceptionally helpful, has resolved all the visa-related issues I encountered.

The experience of dealing employment issues with ATO can be exhausting and frustrating in some situations and from my own experience of nearly one year trying through ATO, the lack of some important materials like payslip means the failure from the beginning. Therefore, I think the suggestion of turning to ATO for help to deal with issues like underpayment and unfair treatment shall be considered twice. And lawyers should have more experience of how case works out in reality and so can help better judge the possibility of the success in ATO process from the very beginning. Based on this, students can therefore save a lot of time and do not have unrealistic hope that turn out to be unachievable in the end. And the education of how to better protect the rights and collect useful evidence shall be more and in advance to avoid more students to get into similar sad situation again.

I believe such legal services are of a great relief and help to get better insights into the legal immigration issues and concern.

Kathryn is great!!

Kat was amazing!

My appointment with Kai Reyes was really insightful. She is very friendly, communicative and knowledgeable. I appreciate her meeting with me and am thankful for her support to me.

An excellent service! I felt heard and supported and knew what my options were at the end of the consultation. Thank you.

very clear and it is very convenient to ask questions online

I received very helpful assistance and tips, thank you.

Kathy's advice was right on point. The whole consultation was very professional and comprehensive and she was able to present different options and alternatives on tenancy agreement. I was able to talk with my property manager today and with Kathy's advice I was able to achieve what I endeavored.

I thought free service are usually not very professional. But the legal services I had was extraordinary, Kathryn is wonderful and patient, she answered all my enquiries and it was very clear.

ANU students are lucky to have the ANUSA legal service and the excellent staff that work there. Kathryn Lee went above and beyond in her consultations and provided detailed summaries of our meetings. Her advice was in-depth and thorough. She took the time to understand my legal issue and to provide appropriate, useful and timely advice. I also appreciate her knowledge of the legal area in question and her frank and caring advice. Thank you so much.

Would you be able to have more frequent appointment services? So that appointment waiting times would be lower, and appointments would be more accessible to students

Kai is a very approachable person, who she tailors your legal needs when giving advices

The lawyer was so kind and patience. It did helped me a lot 🙏

Very good

Can maybe provide some related sources for students in the waiting period

Michael Curtotti was incredible kind, empathetic and helpful

She is a Very nice kind lawyer

Thank you for the advice on the Visa application. Students are capable in filling in application forms and prepare all the documents needed. Sometimes we only need some clarifications on what the questions in the application are looking for. Your help in clarifying items with the publicly available documents is exactly what I need in this visa application. This ANUSA service relieved my financial stress from lodging the application through a migration agent.

Could not recommend enough, great interaction, able to accommodate rapidly

As bond issues are common for students, public accessible tips regarding how to defend our interests during renting a home might be helpful

Kathryn was very helpful. If I had not sought help I was going to be ill informed.

It is very helpful. It will be great that the ANU organize more law related event.

This has helped me immensely with with tenancy issue. Having access to legal services as a student has significantly helped.

very good

Thank you

I haven't needed to use this service before, but found it very helpful and engaging when I needed it, so I really appreciate the access that's given by ANUSA.

Very responsive, kind and useful thx !

The translator staff is rude and disrespectful

It's much easier to seek legal advice than to research policy on my own. It is good to consult with someone knowledgeable and experienced before making decisions.

Very Good!

Really helpful and understanding! had a bit of trouble logging in to the call, but I think its because I was using the phone!

Patient, professional, and very helpful.

services on a fee to families related to students and their studies

The one-to-one session is always very helpful and considered. I also wanted to say that I've participated in one of the Monday Coffee sessions with a group of other students with similar concerns, which I found very helpful as well.

Michael was lovely, very helpful and generally supportive in the process. He provided great advice on how to finalise/close a resolved Occupancy matter such that it wouldn't be a future legal issue and/or financial liability. I couldn't have been more satisfied with the whole process from booking to meeting with Michael - and I will recommend students use the ANUSA legal service more often.