



ANUSA Student Assistance Team Report

Quarter 3, 2023 (June-August)

Overview

Q3 2023 saw the return of students in semester 2, 2023. We also started seeing Postgraduate students whom brought to us unique situations that we had not previously dealt with when only seeing undergraduate students. Due to the expansion of our service, we also had two new staff members join our team, Casey and Suzie. We saw an unexpected rise of students requiring fee-related support (late fee payment etc.), which suggests either students are more aware of our services or they are being correctly referred to us for assistance. We have also seen a few PhD disciplinary queries which required some brainstorming as it was not something we had dealt with in the past. To assist us with our PhD queries, we have been reaching out to the Dean of Students who has been very helpful with our transition. The team has also been looking at doing more training during this transition phase of taking on new students.

We also restarted our Skill Up program in August. We offered students the opportunity to complete Responsible Service of Alcohol training, Coffee Basics training, and to get a reimbursement of their Working With Vulnerable People card.

Q3 figures

Grant/ Program	Total Successful	Total Unsuccessful	Total Pending	Total
ANUSA Assistance Grant (AAG)	44 (\$12,690)	18	3	65
ANUSA Medical Grant (AMG)	16 (\$3,034)	0	0	16
ANUSA Carers Grant (ACG)	3 (\$1,500)	1	0	5

Accommodation Assistance Program (AAP)	9 (\$3,160)	2 (a student was successful but didn't show up. We were not charged)	0	11
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Grant/ Program	UG Successful (# and \$)	PGCW Successful (# and \$)	PGHDR Successful (# and \$)
AAG	23 (\$5,665)	22 (\$7,025) *	
AMG	9 (\$1,682)	7 (\$1,542)	1 (\$110)
ACG	0	2 (\$1,000)	1 (\$500)
AAP	2 (\$1,385) 14 nights	7 (\$1,565) 20 nights	2 (\$210) 3 nights
GVP	137 (\$6850)		
TVP	100 (\$161)		

*for this quarter, we did not separate AAG to PGCW and PGHDR, but will do so from next quarter onwards.

Casework spotlight areas

Matter	Count	Percentage
Total Matters (emails, zoom, in person meeting, phone calls)	1037	
Academic Matters (Spec Cons, Def Exams, Academic integrity, Appeals, course issues, academic advocacy)	770	74%
Disciplinary Matters	48	4%
Financial Matters	184	17%
Health	77	7%

Suicidal Ideation	21	2%
Accommodation	54	5%
Others (incl. Tax help, legal referrals)	62	5%

*Each case could pertain to multiple matters, hence there are more matters compared to the total.

Contact method:

Email	849
Zoom	35
In Person	138
Phone	9
Undisclosed	7

Student Breakdown:

UG	689	66%
PG CW	259	24%
PG HDR	27	2.6%
Unknown	62	5.9%

Financial

The Student Assistance Team portfolio received additional funding to acknowledge the wider cohort of students that we are now assisting. The amount received was just under twice our previous budget, meaning while there is an increase, we were still similarly strict with our granting criteria. We were stricter with our grocery voucher program due to our funding constraints, but no further tightening of criteria was undertaken apart from what was already done in the previous quarter.

Despite only starting our PG support this quarter, we saw almost half of our grant applications come from Postgraduate students. This suggests our messaging is working and that students are reaching out to the right services for financial assistance.

Postgraduates were provided with more money despite having an almost equal number of grant applications as undergraduates. This is likely due to the fact that postgraduates are more likely to have a family in tow while studying, which means they may require funds to be able to care for their families.

We have also had a decrease in GVP applications due to our tightening of our criteria (requesting students to disclose their savings).

We restarted our TVP, and it was reasonably used, as per the table above.

Revised all application forms

SAT revised all application forms for ANUSA grants and programs to include postgrads in the eligibility criteria.

SOAD Grant

ANUSA has agreed to administer a grant for the school of arts. This will be a financial hardship grant and the school will fund this grant. ANSUA SAT will only administer the grant.

Increase in ANU Book bursary budget

The bursary has a cash surplus of \$4000 because of some inactivity in the COVID-impacted years. We will most likely be able to use this at the start of semester 1 2024.

GCAP

5 successful applicants were approved and granted free regalia hire for their graduations for semester 1 2023.

Skill Up 2023

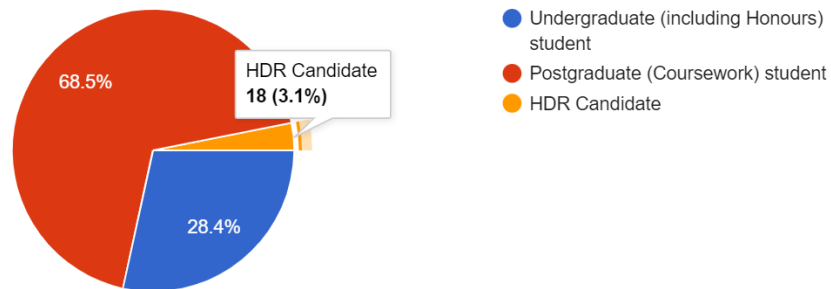
We also restarted our Skill Up program in August. We offered students the opportunity to complete Responsible Service of Alcohol training, Coffee Basics training, and to get a reimbursement of their Working With Vulnerable People card.

We had a large number of applicants (577 students). Of which about 70% of applicants were postgraduates. The majority of applicants overall were international students.

Are you a

577 responses

Copy



All three programs under Skill Up ran smoothly. We had a budget of \$10k which we will look to review due to the unprecedented number of applications we received.

The two courses were held at CIT Reid, whereas the WWVP card reimbursement was just a reimbursement of up to \$146 to the students' nominated account.

While it was a success, there were a few teething issues that we would like to smoothen out for next time, which we captured in a debrief document.

Equity tickets

We processed equity tickets for 3 clubs to help these clubs make their events more accessible. They all ran smoothly, and we were fortunate to help clubs make their equity ticket process more accessible.

Academic

74% of students contacting SAT require academic assistance, an increase of 10% from last quarter. We noticed that Postgraduate Coursework academic-related issues were similar to undergraduate issues. Issues that we saw an increase of were: grade appeals, Academic integrity issues, Postgrad coursework matters and Credit transfers. We were also notified of the new change, which is the Extenuating Circumstances Application (ECA) replaces the Special Con/deferred exam process.

Late Withdrawals

While we saw a slight improvement on processing times for Late Withdrawal applications, we also saw a massive increase of declined applications. This is despite students providing documentation to support their claim. We intend to speak to ASQO to determine the best way we can support students.

Grade appeals

As it was the end of the semester, we also saw the usual increase of grade appeal applications. We provided the admin team with a template that they could send to students, if students are requiring basic instructions on how to appeal. We are then booking students in to see us if their matter was more complex/requires more support.

Academic integrity

Similarly, we also saw an increase of academic integrity matters as the outcomes of students' final exam marks were released.

Postgrad coursework matters

As noted above, we saw that PGCW matters were similar to Undergraduate students. We saw a good number of students attending our service who identify as being PGCW students. We are glad that the messaging is coming across to PG students.

Credit transfers

We saw an unusual increase of student queries regarding credit transfers and the rejection of their credit transfers. We guided students through the appeals process. Most of them were able to be resolved, with others needing to revise their academic program to ensure that they can graduate on time.

ECA replaces Special Con/deferred exam.

The ANU made the change to scrap Deferred Exams and Special consideration. As of semester 2, 2023, it is replaced by ECA. We met with Brendon at exams and also Hayley Aulia from ASQO to discuss what this process would look like practically. We have written a blog to outline what the changes are:

<https://anusa.com.au/welfare/academic/extenuatingcircumstancesapplication/>

Postgraduate/HDR support

We also provided HDR candidates with support regarding their program, scholarship and also to advocate on their behalf. This is a new space that we are working in and we were able to get useful assistance from the Dean of Students. We also gained access to the "HDR for decision makers" online portal so that we were able to identify the relevant office that we needed to contact for assistance.

Accommodation

ANUSA Accommodation Assistance Program

ANU Accommodation Bursary

SAT is part of the committee that reviews the ANU undergraduate accommodation bursaries. As part of the committee, we reviewed applications and provided our recommendations on each. We reviewed 55 applications this quarter, of which most have expressed an increase in day-to-day expenditure and loss of income as their main reasons for applying. We also reviewed a higher number of applicants than last quarter (26), as we are now reviewing both PG and UG applications.

This quarter, we met with the residential experience team and recommended key changes in accommodation bursary criteria, including

- Removing the requirement to be fully enrolled
- Standardise the amount for both undergraduate and postgraduates - remove the difference in available amounts
- Promote the bursary extensively

Disciplinary

Students with a number of appeals and disciplinary cases were assisted by SAT. The majority of these cases relate to sexual assault and sexual harassment (SASH). The cases also included matters including online abuse and fraudulent documents, amongst others.

We have had an increase in referrals from the SSWT, and similarly, we have also referred students to the SSWT team for support.

Other Activities

Updates to the Website - ECA, Postgrads

We updated the website and all our grants and programs to reflect that postgrads are also eligible and are encouraged to use our services.

SAT recruitment

26 applications were processed. After a very competitive recruitment round, we are delighted to have Casey & Suzie on board.

The process involved updating PDs, advertising positions, shortlisting applicants, conducting interviews and onboarding. Everything went smoothly with the support of Ben, Elenor and the admin team.

Coordination with the departments

On 6th June & 23rd June, we coordinated with DSA in resolving multiple students' issues.

August 1st

We attended the August 1st protest. We were able to gain insight from students regarding their experiences and the issues that are still persistent at the ANU. We did not receive an uptick of disclosures, but we were ready should we have had any.

Some wins

- A recipient of accommodation assistance program emailed on 27th July
 - "It would be two nights that I stayed in the accommodation center. Sincerely I want to express my gratitude for the help from you and the student association. The support that had given to me is crucial for these days. Thank you again!"
- A student supported with the allegation of breach of academic integrity emailed on 26th July
 - "The case was dismissed, and I just wanted to say thank you very much for all of your help."

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A student undergoing Show Cause and Late Withdrawal stated on 16/08:

Would I be able to book again some time next week after the Tuesday?

Just wanted to also let you know I have also felt immensely relieved by the guidance as it did feel like I was alone in this.

- A student requiring support with their OS-HELP loan on 18/07::

Hiya Emily,

Today I got the confirmation email for the loan. Thank you so much for everything and all your help I will not forget this.

- 6th June

Hi Hassan,

The issue has been resolved, as I was able to take Monday off of work to do the exam. Thank you for the advice provided.

- 28 August

Hello Emily and team,

My family and I want to thank you all for the help you've given over the last week. The last few years have been tough on us, and if you knew the details, you'd understand how much your efforts have meant to us. So please take my word for it, that you're doing the good work and making the positive differences that you no doubt sought to make by choosing to do the jobs you're doing.

All the best,

- A student who received a \$50 grocery voucher was very grateful on 13th Sept:

Dear Suzie,

[...] I wanted to take a moment to express my heartfelt gratitude for your prompt assistance and the ANUSA Grocery Vouchers I received recently. Your support means more to me than words can convey.

Receiving these vouchers has had a significant impact on my life, especially during these challenging times. They have provided essential relief, allowing me to access nutritious food and meet my basic needs without added financial stress. Your dedication to helping students like me who are facing unexpected difficulties is truly commendable.

I would like to assure you that I will use these vouchers responsibly and efficiently, ensuring that they go towards securing essential groceries for myself. This support not only helps me with my immediate needs but also eases my overall financial situation, enabling me to focus on my studies and strive for success in my academic pursuits.

Your kindness and the ANUSA Grocery Voucher Program have made a profound difference in my life, and I am sincerely grateful for your assistance. It's heartening to know that our university cares for its students' well-being and offers practical help when it's needed most.

[...] Thank you once again for your assistance, and I am truly appreciative of your help during this time.

Community connections, networking and training

Presentations & Panels

- Bush Week
 - ADLT1001
 - Stall at CECC
 - Stall at CBE
 - Stall at services market day?

Community connections:

- ECA Meeting on 7th July with Aulia & Robert
- DoS meeting on 16/08 to meet Casey and Suze
- Meeting with Brendon on 10/08 to meet Casey and Suze and to discuss common themes and issues.

Training

- SAT induction for Casey & Suzie
- Privacy training on Pulse for Casey & Suzie
- Booked suicide intervention training for Casey & Suzie
- Booked Ally training for Casey & Suzie
- Completed Induction training for supervisors at Pulse - Hassan

Future goals and focus areas

- Re-taking grocery vouchers from the admin team
- Trainings & conference
- Improving data management