



ANUSA Student Assistance Team Report

Quarter 3, 2022 (July-September)

Overview

This report provides an overview of what the Student Assistance Team (SAT) has been up to from July-September 2022. It has been a busy 3 months especially now that COVID-19 restrictions are lifting and there are more students on campus. Much of our time has been spent administering financial support, organising the Skill Up program, meeting with university stakeholders and with student appointments.

With the release of the Semester 1 results on the 30th June, there was a high amount of students reaching out for information about grade appeals. The admin team helped out a lot by responding to the initial requests and passing them on if they were more complicated.

Lastly, with the gradual return to campus, there have been a higher number of disciplinary cases, including SASH. We have also noticed that there has been an increase in appeals.

Q3 highlights

ANUSA SAT Statistics	(July-Sept 2022)
Grocery vouchers (410 applications processed)	\$15,500
Transport vouchers (currently suspended)	-
Assistance grants (123 application processed)	60,964
Medical Emergency Grant (14 applications processed)	3,750
COVID-19 Grant (32 applications processed)	10,520
Carers Grant (application processed)	0

Accommodation Grant (8 applications processed)	772
ANU Book Award (applications processed)	0

Casework spotlight areas

Financial

Another very busy quarter with the financial grants with approximately \$75K spent on grants. We also saw a spike in the use of ANUSA grocery vouchers where 410 applications (amounting to \$15,500) were processed by our wonderful admin team. Other activities in this space included processing GCAP, GEAP, Skill Up program, Tax Help program and reviewing ANU accommodation bursaries.

There has been a steady uptake with the ANUSA grants, especially the ANUSA Assistance Grant. This grant is able to assist eligible students with up to \$750 per semester. For this quarter we have assisted 123 students with this grant. Some of the common reasons for applying include ongoing health issues, the global impacts of COVID-19, and issues with accommodation.

COVID-19 Grant had a decent uptake after its launch in April. As the landscape is shifting in the COVID-19 space (suspension of quarantine requirements, decline in cases in ACT etc.) we have seen a steady decline in demand. Last month, only 1 student applied for this grant whereas approximately 100 students had applied in the 3 months preceding September.

We have also observed a rise in grocery voucher applications despite offering more meal options through BKSS and ANUSA meals programs. This is also an area of interest where we will keep a close eye.

Skill Up relaunch

This quarter we were able to relaunch Skill Up with the help of the Welfare Officer, Grace. ANUSA's Skill Up Program is designed to help students find casual work while studying at ANU. The program covers the cost of the following training(s)/ certification:

- Responsible Service of Alcohol
- Coffee-making training
- Working with Vulnerable People Card

Under this program we have been able to assist 78 students gain these certifications. These certifications were chosen with the help of Grace, who was able to identify what training students would benefit from.

There were 92 students who expressed interest in this program and we further advertised on social media to fill the numbers for the day.

Students have been really appreciative about the service and have also asked about other possible training such as a first aid certificate and a customer service certificate as delivered by CIT. This is something that SAT can look into when running the program in the future.

GCAP processed

The Graduation Ceremony Assistance Program (GCAP) assists students who are experiencing financial hardship that might prevent them attending their graduation ceremony. The program covers the cost of academic regalia hire for the approved applicants. We received a total of 4 applications for the July 2022 session, out of which 2 were successful.

GEAP

Graduation Exhibition Assistance program has recommenced after a gap due to COVID-19 lockdowns. This program is run in collaboration with the School of Arts & Design.

4 students applied for the program and 3 were successful in getting their exhibition fee waived.

Tax Help

We assisted just 1 student with Tax Help this year. Most of the students were referred to the CBE Tax Clinic for assistance.

Academic

We continue to assist students with a range of academic matters. As with any other term, there were quite a few queries regarding grade appeal, deferred exam, special consideration and academic misconduct matters. Other academic matters the students were assisted with included response to show cause, late withdrawals, applying for leave as an international student, and others.

Late Withdrawals

We are still seeing the ongoing impacts of COVID-19 has had for students. Many have reached out to us and asked for assistance in removing the negative impact of

the grades in 2020 and 2021, which were greatly impacted by the isolation during COVID-19.

Generally we see students with significant mental health issues or difficult experiences while assisting them through the late withdrawal process.

Show Cause

The show cause notices went out to students who had breached the academic progression threshold (failed 8 or more courses). We assisted many students in responding successfully to show cause. Another win was where a student was excluded from the university after the show cause process. We were able to successfully apply for some late withdrawals which nullified the initial exclusion. That student is likely to complete their degree this semester.

Academic Integrity

SAT has assisted with a lot of academic integrity cases especially from the CBE and CECS. The process has been standardised and streamlined to an extent with the introduction of the Academic Integrity Rules 2021. This has meant that students are receiving fairer and proportionate outcomes for breaching the rule.

There have also been a number of students that we have assisted who have been found to have breached the rule on a Proctorio exam. Students have explained that online exams have made it a lot more tempting to collude with other students, check their notes, or use a device. Some of them have even asked for a return to in person exams.

7th October - dropping courses without failure

The deadline to drop courses without failure is a time that triggers a spike in students reaching out to ANUSA for help. The same was the case this quarter, where students wanted to understand the meaning of this, any steps they have to take before dropping the course (especially if they are an international student), the impact on the length of their degree etc.

Job-Ready Graduates Package

We had a meeting with Brendon from the Examination Office who alerted us to the introduction of the Job-Ready Graduates Package. This package was developed by the Morrison government and will have real impacts on students. The legislation stipulates that if a student has a low completion rate which means that they have failed more than 50% of their courses after completing 8 courses they are no longer eligible for HECS or Commonwealth Support.

Here is a link to the FAQ that has more details about the package:

<https://www.education.gov.au/job-ready/faqs>

Accommodation

ANU Accommodation Bursary

SAT is part of the committee which reviews the ANU undergraduate accommodation bursaries. As part of the committee, we reviewed applications and provided our recommendations on each.

Cathie, a long time ANU accommodation staff member, has moved to Access and Inclusion. A new staff member, Ksenia from ANU accommodation, is providing administrative support in managing the accommodation bursaries.

ANUSA Emergency Accommodation

SAT had a meeting with the Canberra Accommodation Centre to see if we can come to an arrangement for the Emergency Accommodation program. The centre is under new management and is located at the old Fenner Hall.

We made an agreement on the 5th September, that outlined a fixed payment rent, the type of accommodation and communication methods. In this accommodation, students will be staying in separate rooms as compared to YHA (which had shared rooms), they will still have to share bathroom and kitchen facilities. Even though this will cost a bit more, we feel confident that the students will be in a safer setting.

Disciplinary

SAT has been assisting students with a number of disciplinary cases. From our understanding, there has been a significant increase in the amount of cases and appeals that have been pursued this year.

Some of the types of cases we have assisted with include:

- Sexual assault and sexual harrassment
- Bullying and harassment
- Cases under Medical Leave Rule

We are still receiving referrals from the Student Safety and Wellbeing Team (SSWT). Some of these include helping students respond to an allegation, those looking for general guidance and others who need some financial assistance.

NSSS report & Protests:

SAT was present at the SASH protest on 1st August with the hopes of providing a supportive environment for students and a safe space to have a conversation if needed.

The Womens Department and ANUSA executives did a fantastic job with the teach in and overall protest.

Other Activities

Equity Tickets for FNP & Psych Ball

For this quarter, SAT was involved in creating and assessing the applications for equity tickets for the Psych Ball and for FNP.

SAT attended FNP to staff a safe space for students. The night went without any major incidents. The team and execs did a really great job setting this up and the night was a success.

Recommended changes to Disciplinary Rule 2021

SAT is working with the Legal Team and other stakeholders to develop some recommendations to the rules with the hopes of making the process more equitable, and restorative for all parties involved.

This is an ongoing project and we hope to have some recommendations in 2023.

Meeting with Tanya from CBE- 9th September

SAT are reaching out to the academic colleges to promote our services and to further understand how the colleges are supporting students.

CBE has approximately a quarter of all students enrolled in the University. They are strongly encouraging their students to come and speak with the academic advisors and engage with the student services within the college. They did not see an overlap or any gaps in the services that we provide. We imagine that this will be part of an ongoing relationship.

Updates to the Website and Creating a Support Service Directory

We have found that an important part of the SAT job is connecting students to other support services - i.e. health services, food pantries, accommodation providers. SAT has spent some time organising the details for the main services in Canberra and will place this information on the website. We are currently working with Kate to get this up and running.

SURF Bursary discussion

Wendy from the Coursework Scholarship team reached out on 19th August. She mentioned that uptake of SURF has been lower than expected and they are looking to lower the threshold for students to apply for this grant. SURF provides a \$1,000 grant to students.

The team from SURF was also interested in verifying from ANUSA if the applicants of SURF bursary have already been assisted by ANUSA. We declined this proposal stating that we cannot share any information about the students who have received financial assistance from ANUSA. We are an independent organisation, separate from the university, and sharing any information of the financial assistance recipients will undermine our commitment to confidentiality and independence.

Community connections, networking and training

Presentations & Panels

- Off-Campus accommodation for International Students (presented with the ANUSA Legal team)
- “How to Adult” sessions during Bush week
- Market Day stall during Bush week
- Part of the panel on Academic Integrity Awareness Day 2nd August 2022

Community connections:

- Met Ian Walker - discussed postgraduate students issues (2nd August)
- Meeting with Brendon (Graduation office) on 5th September
- Meeting with Tanya Ali (CBE Student Services Manager) 9th September
- Meeting with Kathryn and Beth from Registrar's Office
- Postgraduate Services Support and Representation Taskforce

Training

- Board Director 22nd July

Future goals and focus areas

- Prepare for assisting postgraduate students.
- Prepare to support students impacted by the Job Ready Graduate program.