



ANUSA Student Assistance Team Report

Quarter 1 & 2, 2022 (Jan-June)

Overview

This report provides an overview of what the Student Assistance Team (SAT) has been up to in the first half of 2022. With the relaxation of COVID-19-related restrictions, we saw many students returning to campus, participating in on-campus learning and engaging with ANUSA more. The SAT also transitioned from mainly working remotely to mostly working from the office and returned to taking in-person appointments.

Returning to the campus came with its challenges. A few students struggled to find accommodation at the start of the year, who were assisted by the ANUSA Emergency Accommodation program.

There were also some changes to certain academic adjustments, which were initially developed to respond to COVID-19. For example, CRS/CRN grading ended, and personal statements are no longer accepted as sufficient supporting evidence for special consideration/extension/ deferred exam applications.

There was a higher than usual uptake for all of the ANUSA grants, which we believe can be attributed to better awareness of ANUSA services, quick turnaround time, and the option of additional grants such as the COVID-19 grant. In this quarter, more than \$150k was spent in grants and more than \$25k in Grocery Voucher and other programs.

Lastly, with the return to campus, there were a higher number of disciplinary cases, including SASH.

A big change in SAT was that Emily Yam went on parental leave in March and is now enjoying time with her beautiful baby, Hayley. Georgia van der Stap joined the team as the parental cover and is enjoying her role.

Q1 & Q2 highlights

ANUSA SAT Statistics		(Jan-June 2022)
Grocery vouchers (500 applications processed)		\$25,000
Transport vouchers (currently suspended)		N/A
Assistance grants (243 application processed)		\$122,398
Medical Emergency Grant (31 applications processed)		\$7,912
COVID-19 Grant (71 applications processed)		\$24,102
Carers Grant (1 application processed)		0
Accommodation Grant (3 applications processed)		\$600
Eun Ju Bursary (recommended 1 recipient)		\$850
ANU Book Award (4 applications processed)		\$1,256
ANU Accommodation Bursary		9 applications processed



Casework spotlight areas

• **Financial**

Following on from exceptional circumstances in 2020-21, there is still a high uptake of ANUSA's grants and programs. 243 AAG and 31 AMG applications were processed in these quarters. We have noticed some trends with the applications, such as:

- There have been many international students applying for grants, as many of their families have been impacted financially by the COVID-19 lockdowns overseas. The events overseas impact the uptake of financial grants at ANUSA.
- The high cost of living in Canberra has added to student's financial challenges i.e. unexpected electricity and gas bills, bond payments, rent payments, breaking leases, moving costs
- A lot of students have applied as they have fallen ill and are not entitled to sick leave. This is particularly bad for students who have contracted COVID-19 and are required to isolate for at least 7 days. We have assisted students with a variety of medical expenses including dental bills, psych appointments, endometriosis, x-rays and ultrasounds, and others.

• **Grocery Vouchers**

There has also been an uptake in the Grocery Voucher programs as there has been 500 applications this quarter and we have spent \$25,000 on vouchers. The administration staff have now taken over issuing these (thanks!)

• **Launched COVID-19 Grant**

With the help of the Welfare Officer, SAT was able to launch a grant that assists students who have been financially impacted by COVID-19. Unfortunately many students at ANU- such as international students, students who do not work enough hours, students who are receiving Youth Allowance etc. have "fallen through the gaps" and are ineligible for other COVID government support payments (such as the Pandemic Leave payment). This grant was developed to ease the financial burden. There has been a good uptake with this grant and there have been 72 applications since the launch on 21st April 2022.

• **Skill Up relaunch**

ANUSA also offers the Skill Up Program, which has been designed to assist students to complete short courses to increase their employability while they are studying. This program has been relaunched after the disruption caused by COVID-19. The Welfare Officer, Grace has done a lot on this and has liaised with CIT. Under this program, we



will be able to assist students with their RSA, Coffee making training and/or their Working With Vulnerable Peoples Card.

· ANU Book Award

The ANU Book Award continued to be administered by ANUSA and funded by ANU scholarships. 4 students were assisted in getting textbooks via this program.

· Eun Ju bursary

The Eun Ju bursary is awarded every year. The amount is up to \$850 per year. The recipient of this grant is selected by SAT. Generally, students would have to access our ANUSA Emergency Grant to be able to access this bursary. We have nominated and paid a student for this bursary.

· 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, extending the degree beyond 10 years and others.

One of the big wins in the show cause/ LW space was that SAT helped a student get reinstated after exclusion from the university. We helped the student to successfully apply for the late withdrawals which nullified the decision made under the show cause notice. The student is now enrolled in Semester 2, working towards completing their degree.

· Late Withdrawals

COVID-19 has impacted a lot of students and a few of them have just started to recover from that. They have reached out to us and asked for assistance in removing the negative impact of the grades 2020 & 2021, which were greatly impacted by the isolation during COVID.

· Academic Integrity

The Academic Integrity Rule 2021 is now effective from December 1, 2021. It has streamlined and standardised the process to a great extent. There were a few instances in CECS where the course convener misunderstood or wrongly applied the Rule. It was timely taken up with the Dean of Students and Associate Dean of CECS, Natalie Loyd, who was able to step in and rectify the issue.



. 15th March - eCOE cancellation/ expiry of visa

A few students reached out to us a few days before 15th March, the date when a few international student visas expire. The legal team assisted them with the extension of visas and getting a bridging visa. SAT assisted these students in applying for program leave/ extension of eCOE, course withdrawals, financial assistance, connecting with MH services and others.

. 6th May - dropping courses without failure

The deadline to drop courses without failure is a time that triggers a spike in students reaching out for help to ANUSA. The same was the case this year, where students wanted to understand the meaning of this, any steps they have to take before dropping the course, the impact on the length of their degree etc. They were advised accordingly.

Accommodation

ANU Accommodation Bursary

SAT is part of the committee which reviews the ANU undergraduate accommodation bursaries. As part of the committee, we reviewed 9 applications and provided our recommendations on each.

In the absence of the representative from the registrar, Scott Walker from ANU Accommodation is the other committee member

Along with Eleanor and Christian, we also spoke to ANU about raising the weekly limit for the accommodation bursary- this will raise the maximum amount that a student will be able to receive and make the Canberra rental market more accessible.

This will be part of ongoing discussions.

ANUSA Emergency Accommodation

ANUSA provides emergency accommodation for up to 7 nights to eligible students. We used to provide this accommodation at YHA Hostels in City. Unfortunately, YHA decided to wind up their business in Canberra.

We were in touch with The Village Hostels, who have taken over the property of YHA. Despite several attempts, we have been unable to have a reasonable arrangement with them for ongoing engagement. We are now looking into other options such as the Canberra Accommodation Centre in Braddon.



Disciplinary

We assisted multiple students with disciplinary complaints on SASH, bullying and harassment. We also assisted a few students in appealing the outcome of disciplinary actions.

Some of the matters in these hearings and appeals were:

- Sexual assault and sexual harassment
- Expulsion on medical grounds
- Expulsion on breach of academic integrity
- Bullying and harassment

Quite a few students were assisted with appealing the outcome of the disciplinary hearing. One of the success stories was when the expulsion of a student from the university was overturned by the Appeals Committee. The decision of expulsion was changed to a reprimand. The student was very thankful to be part of the ANU community again.

Another success story was assisting a student who was being considered for expulsion on medical grounds. They were assisted in collaboration with their support persons from NDIS. The student was suspended for 6 months only (they were planning to take a break anyway to focus on their health). The student was very thankful for the support provided by ANUSA.

The Student Safety & Wellbeing team (SSWT) is now operational and provides casework assistance to the survivors of SASH. We have developed a good working relationship with them in which we refer students to each other.

We also provided feedback to SSWT on the accessibility of the disclosure form. This has been an ongoing issue and still has room to improve.

. [NSSS report & Protests:](#)

SAT was present at the SASH protest on 30th March with the hopes of providing a supportive environment for students and a safe space to have a conversation if needed.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

. [Website review](#)

We have been continuing our work with Kate to update the ANUSA website, specifically the Student Assistance page. This is an ongoing project which we hope to



continue going forward. We specifically worked on the page on sexual assault & sexual harassment.

We have also changed the name of the ANUSA Emergency Grant to ANUSA Assistance Grant (as recommended by Grace) to make it more inviting for students. The application forms for the grants and programs have also been reviewed and updated.

• Annual planning

Continuing the practice of start of the year planning, annual planning for Student Assistance was done in which the team determined key focus areas. It included planning for the parental cover role, prioritising the financial and academic matters, preparing for the transition back to in-person service, and restarting the Skill Up program

• BKSS/ new staff induction

SAT participated in the induction of new staff (admin, legal and BKSS) and explained the SAT services and the referral process. We also did a follow-up training with the BKSS staff in April. We found it to be more useful as the staff had now relatively settled in their role and were aware of more issues. At this refresher we spoke about:

- Referral pathways (an important way to connect students to the SAT)
- Role of the SAT team- Academic, Financial and Welfare
- Importance of maintaining boundaries and self-care
- Other support services that can be helpful in a crisis
- Coming up with a code word for an uncomfortable situation
- Importance of open communication, checking in and asking questions.

• Catch up with Women Department (Contraception subsidy)

Spoke to Avan about the subsidy for contraception on campus. We have included the program in our "Grant Outcome" email and sent the details through to students that we think would benefit from this. The students that we have spoken to about this program have been very happy with the subsidy.

Community connections, networking and training

Presentations & Panels

- Adulting sessions during O week



- Market Day stall during O week
- Part of the panel on Student Integrity Day

Community connections:

- ACTCOSS – attended the members' forum
- Meeting with Brendon (ANU Examination)
- Meeting with the Dean of Students (Jenni and Peter)
- Meeting with Kenzia (new international student advisor). She is part of the Jason/Jules team and will work on international student matters. Upon discussion, we understood that the role is primarily focused on induction and is fixed term, which can be extended if the position becomes ongoing/permanent. She also has a person (level 5) assisting her in this role.
- Met with Student Safety & Wellbeing team (twice)
- Attended “Paws the Pressure ” event at CECS to help CECS students destress during the exam period and to learn more about the support services available.
- Meeting with Nadia (Health Care Consumer Association) to help with her health paper on International Students and the impacts of COVID and access to services
 - Spoke about mental health issues/ isolation etc. from COVID
 - Health literacy barriers/ lack of understanding about the support services.
 - Shared other services that may be able to assist with her research including PARSA for the post-grad experience.

Training:

- Completed Hue: Colour the Conversation Training (workshops 1 and 2). Important to be part of the dialogue and make changes in our own lives. (Hassan & Georgia)
- Completed a day-long ‘Corporate Governance & Risk Management Training’ by the Centre of Continued Learning, Sydney. (Hassan)
- Completed 2-day Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (Georgia)

Future goals and focus areas

- Update website- We aim to add more resources and information to our website and make it more accessible with the help of Kate.
- Enhance the in-person service (drop-ins) especially since the University is returning to face-to-face teaching from online learning and it is the colleges who will make decisions on the mode of delivery for each course.
- Reach out to more departments and discuss how we can support off-campus students.
- Prepare for assisting postgraduate students
- Adding a feedback form SAT service to capture students’ feedback and recommendations.