

Position Description



Position title:	Senior Student Advocate
School/Directorate/VCO:	Student Experience and Administration Services (SEAS)
Campus:	Mt Helen Campus. Travel between campuses may be required.
Classification:	Within the HEW Level 6 range
Time fraction:	Part-time
Employment mode:	Fixed-term employment
Mandatory directions	Directions from Victoria's Chief Health Officer require all Victorian-based Federation University workers to be fully vaccinated, unless they are an Excepted Person as defined by the COVID-19 Mandatory Vaccination (Workers) Directions.
Further information from:	Luke Icely, Manager Student Advocacy Telephone: (03) 5327 6696 Email: l.icely@federation.edu.au
Recruitment number:	851192

Position summary

Student Advocacy is a key contributor to student satisfaction, retention and success at Federation University. Student Advocates provide confidential case management, advice and support for a diverse cohort of students around any matters which impact on their educational experience. This includes provision of accurate, concise and timely information in relation to academic matters (assessment and student progress); internal and external appeal processes; University legislation, policies and procedures covering complaint handling (bullying, harassment, discrimination and grievance) and academic and general misconduct.

The Senior Student Advocate will be responsible for the delivery and promotion of face-to-face student advocacy to students enrolled at Federation University Mt Helen, western campuses, as well as online provision to students at other campuses, including Brisbane and Partner Providers. This includes a diverse community of students ranging from TAFE, undergraduate, postgraduate and HDR and students enrolled in online study, including those studying offshore. The position is required to build and maintain stakeholder networks, both internally and externally, that will assist in supporting students to successfully continue their studies at the University and engage constructively with both students and staff in the resolution of student concerns.

This is a student centred role funded by the Student Services Amenities Fee (Student Services, Amenities, Representation and Advocacy Guidelines, Higher Education Support Act 2003) and the position will have a proven track record in a person centred, strengths-based approach in a student focused environment.

Senior Student Advocates act in the best interests of students and their continued success. They will be aware of the barriers commonly experienced by a diverse range of students; the emerging needs, issues and trends students are experiencing and their impact on student progression, retention and success.

The Senior Student Advocate is responsible for provision of in person advice and support for students at the western campuses and email and phone support for other students across the University, where required. Travel between campuses will be required.

The position is based at the Mt Helen campus and requires flexible working to accommodate the student lifecycle. The service's busiest periods are in July and December and this position may be required to work additional hours during these periods, managed via Time Off In Lieu (TOIL).

Portfolio

Student Experience and Administration Services (SEAS) sits within the Academic Portfolio. We are committed to providing quality support and engagement services to students ensuring success in their chosen course of study. We support this commitment through a range of services, programs and activities that are designed to be accessible, professional and responsive to their needs.

Background

At Federation University, we are driven to make a real difference to the lives of every student, and to the communities we serve.

We are one of Australia's oldest universities, known today for our modern approach to teaching and learning. For 150 years, we have been reaching out to new communities, steadily building a generation of independent thinkers united in the knowledge that they are greater together.

Across our university and TAFE campuses in Ballarat, Berwick, Brisbane, Gippsland, and the Wimmera, we deliver world-class education and facilities. With the largest network of campuses across Victoria, as well as a growing Brisbane base, we are uniquely positioned to provide pathways from vocational education and skills training at Federation TAFE through to higher education.

To be successful at Federation University you must be willing to enthusiastically embrace the university's ambition as expressed in the 2021 - 2025 University Strategic Plan and share the University's values of:

INCLUSION, we celebrate our diversity, particularly valuing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage, knowledge and perspectives.

INNOVATION, we are agile and responsive to emerging opportunities.

EXCELLENCE, we act with integrity and take responsibility for achieving high standards.

EMPOWERMENT, we create a supportive environment to take informed risks in pursuit of success.

COLLABORATION, we establish genuine partnerships built on shared goals.

Key responsibilities

1. Independently case manage and resolve complex student concerns through identifying and understanding student issues within the wider University context. Work with students to identify achievable outcomes and guide them in self-advocacy, endeavouring to resolve issues at an informal level before proceeding to formal measures. Where required, make appropriate and targeted referrals to other support services.
2. Coordinate and deliver Student Advocacy to meet the needs of a diverse cohort of students at the Mt Helen Campus and contribute to email and phone support for other students of the University where required.
3. Ensure detailed and confidential client records are kept for all reported cases and provide data and reports on client interactions to the Manager, Student Advocacy. Through monitoring data, prepare briefings and case summaries on current and systemic issues and work collaboratively with the Manager, Student Advocacy to address these through relevant and appropriate University channels.
4. Across the service, develop and lead the introduction of service improvement projects and initiatives
5. Establish and maintain professional networks with general, academic and senior staff in order to act most effectively in the best interests of students. Liaise, consult and negotiate with a wide range of staff on behalf of students, while acknowledging and managing the sensitivities of complex student issues.

6. Maintain a current and comprehensive knowledge of relevant University legislation, policies and procedures and how they impact on students' well-being, academic progression and retention. Ensure advice given to students is accurate and reflects a sound interpretation of relevant University legislation, policies and procedures; participate in regular peer review of case management.
7. Monitor and contribute to University-wide policy development evaluating the impact on students and provide feedback on proposed policies and procedures.
8. In collaboration with colleagues, develop and deliver a range of communication and promotion activities, including on-campus and virtual events, to ensure timely and targeted awareness and utilisation of the service by students and to enhance student knowledge and understanding of their rights and responsibilities.
9. Ensure high levels of discretion and confidentiality in regard to both University and student matters and in accordance with the Federation University Information Privacy Policy.
10. Reflect and embed the University's strategic plan, and operational purpose, priorities, and goals.
11. Undertaking the responsibilities of the position adhering to:
 - the Staff Code of Conduct, Child Safe Code of Conduct, and Conflict of Interest Policy and Procedure;
 - Equal Opportunity and anti-discrimination legislation and requirements;
 - the requirements for the inclusion of people with disabilities in work and study;
 - Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) legislation and requirements; and
 - Public Records Office of Victoria (PROV) legislation.

Level of supervision and responsibility

The Senior Student Advocate works under the broad direction of the Manager, Student Advocacy and is responsible for provision of timely, accurate and expert advice to students seeking information and support around concerns with academic progress, complaints, discipline charges or other University matters impacting on their well-being and success and continuing enrolment at the University. The position is required to work independently as well as within team situations and is required to appropriately prioritise the workload in an environment with conflicting priorities and deadlines. Senior Student Advocates receive monthly professional supervision, alongside peer-reflection opportunities and regular line management supervision.

The Senior Student Advocate is responsible for analysing and resolving a range of issues raised by students which requires the interpretation and application of relevant legislation, policies, procedures and processes as well as a sensitive approach to their resolution. The position exercises their own professional judgement and decision-making skills when managing complex student cases. The position is responsible for researching, describing and interpreting the options available to students (both informal and formal) as well as making recommendations to the Manager, Student Advocacy. The Senior Student Advocate will recognise when to seek expert advice from, or refer matters to, other areas of the University and will exercise professional judgement in determining when to escalate a critical or sensitive student matter to senior staff of the University and will be responsible for the advice provided.

The Senior Student Advocate is required to maintain currency of knowledge in relevant legislation and its interaction with University policies and procedures and how they relate to student enquiries and concerns. The position will also have a comprehensive understanding of student engagement and retention issues including the challenges and barriers facing a diverse cohort of students while studying.

The Senior Student Advocate will demonstrate high levels of integrity, discretion and ethical standards. Adherence to the Federation University privacy Policy and an understanding of confidentiality and professional boundaries are paramount.

Position and Organisational relationships

The Senior Student Advocate reports to the Manager, Student Advocacy and works collaboratively across campuses with other Student Advocates within the service. The Student Advocate is responsible for working effectively with a broad range of both internal and external stakeholders to support students and contribute to their educational experiences and assist them in remaining engaged with their university education. The Student Advocate will manage the sensitivities surrounding often conflicting priorities of the student and other stakeholders of the University.

Key selection criteria

Applicants must demonstrate they are able to undertake the inherent responsibilities of the position as contained in the position description and are able to meet the following key selection criteria:

Training and qualifications

1. Completion of
 - a degree with subsequent relevant experience; or
 - extensive experience in a tertiary education environment and specialist expertise in student advocacy, student associations or community organisations; or
 - an equivalent combination of relevant experience and/or education/training.
2. A valid Working with Children Check (WWC) Assessment Notice and/or WWC Card.

Experience, knowledge and attributes

3. A demonstrated student-centred approach within a case management or advocacy capacity, with high-level professional experience in resolving enquiries and complaints. The position will have a proven track record in a person centred, strengths- based approach in a student focused environment.
4. Demonstrated experience in managing cases to resolution, including a demonstrated ability to facilitate, negotiate and resolve conflicts with a diverse range of individuals and business areas within a University environment.
5. Demonstrated interpersonal, communication, consultation, influencing and negotiation skills, including the ability to liaise with a diverse range of people while navigating successfully through complex, sensitive and confidential issues.
6. Demonstrated understanding of the University environment including the ability to understand the appropriate mechanisms to resolve issues effectively and in the best interests of students.
7. Demonstrated understanding of how to engage constructively with students from diverse backgrounds in the tertiary environment and knowledge of external contemporary factors which influence the retention and success of students.
8. Demonstrated ability to assimilate, analyse and interpret a complex body of knowledge - such as organizational and government policy and legislation - including the ability to pay attention to detail, identify relevant information and investigate further where required.
9. Demonstrated capacity to harness personal resilience.
10. Demonstrated ability to implement and promote services to a range of clients.
11. Demonstrated working knowledge and application of the Child Safety Standards.
12. Demonstrated knowledge and application of appropriate behaviours when engaging with children, including children with a disability and from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds.

The University reserves the right to invite applications and to make no appointment.

It is not the intention of the position description to limit the scope or accountabilities of the position but to highlight the most important aspects of the position. The aspects mentioned above may be altered in accordance with the changing requirements of the role.