

2018 Report of the Dean of Students – Australian National University

Executive Summary

This report covers the period 1 January - 31 December 2018.

The Office of the Dean of Students (“DoS Office” or “the Office”) receives, on a confidential basis, complaints, concerns or enquiries from students about alleged acts, omissions, unreasonable or unfair conduct and broader systemic issues within the ANU. The Office operates as an independent entity within the University providing impartial, neutral advice and consideration of the matters that are brought to it.

Where possible and appropriate, the Office provides guidance, assistance, referral and support to students who have a grievance or who are challenged by a major problem that is interfering with their academic progress. The Office has a key role in assisting the resolution of issues more quickly, more cheaply and with a greater likelihood of a positive outcome for all parties than would be achieved through formal grievance procedures. Importantly, it also provides advice to staff in relation to matters of policy and practice involving students.

The Office is sometimes a first port of call for students. However, perhaps more frequently, students are referred by other students, staff support services, student representatives, Academic and Residential College staff and occasionally family members. The role of the Dean and Deputy Dean of Students is to listen, offer options, encourage and facilitate informal grievance resolution, provide guidance in the case of formal grievance pathways, and facilitate access to support services within the University. The Office acts in an ombuds role within the ANU in the sense that it brings an independent eye to the decisions or actions taken by University officers in cases of student grievance and recommends appropriate outcomes.

During 2018, the Office assisted 900 individuals seeking help with grievances, complaints or requests for assistance. Of those individuals, 33% required multiple visits – approximately the same proportion as in 2017 (during which 36% of individuals required multiple visits). The total number of student contacts for the 2018 period was 1538 (excluding incidental emails etc) compared with 1625 contacts in 2017. The slight decrease may be partially explained by the period of change in the DoS Office in 2018. Long-standing Dean, Associate Professor Paula Newitt (who previously worked three days a week) retired mid-year and the process of finding her replacement meant that the new Dean, Associate Professor Miriam Gani, did not commence until 2 October 2018. During the interim period, the Office was frequently staffed by only one Dean, the Deputy Dean, Dr Peter Hendriks. Nevertheless, the total contacts recorded in 2018 is very similar to the number in 2016: 1547. Since October 2018, the Office has been staffed by two full-time Deans who are both available for appointments five days a week.

Chart 1 shows the trend in the annual number of contacts over the 11 year period 2009 to 2018. After a steady increase over the first eight years of this period, the number of contacts appears to have stabilised over the past three years. However the number of complex situations (partially indicated by the need for multiple visits during which multiple associated

concerns are addressed) continues to grow. Whereas the 934 individuals who contacted the Office in 2017 raised 2369 issues or grievances, in 2018 the 900 individuals who came to us raised 2435 issues or grievances.

A notable trend in 2018 was a continuation of the increases (previously identified in the 2017 Annual Report) in the number of students presenting with grievances or issues relating to: their health (mental or physical); and academic issues (appeals, grade appeals, special consideration, late withdrawals). Other, smaller, increases in frequency of grievances/issues were seen in the categories of: concern about supervision (both HDR and honours); and scholarships. Another trend in 2018 was a continuing increase in the number of students presenting with academic progress, supervision or academic grievance issues that were impacted by or interrelated with their mental health. In 2018, 166 students (18%) of students who contacted the Office presented with complex scenarios involving mental health issues - a further increase on the 158 students (17%) in 2017, and 133 students (16%) in 2016.

As already noted, the number of staff seeking advice from the Office reached its highest point ever at 125 contacts (as opposed to 116 in 2017 and 70 in 2016). This is a particularly welcome trend as significant time and effort has been devoted, over the past two years, to increasing the visibility and awareness of the Office amongst both academic and professional staff. This effort is an ongoing one. The trend is also encouraging as it indicates a proactive approach from staff in seeking advice about student issues in the abstract or at the early stages of problems arising.

After big increases in 2017 the incidence of grievances involving: administrative matters (admission, enrolment, fees, graduation requirements); and student and staff conduct (including behavioural misconduct such as bullying, harassment, and social media abuse) was slightly down in 2018. Grievances relating to personal stresses (particularly financial and accommodation issues) remained at the same level as in 2017.

The total number of individuals who contacted the Office in 2018 represented 38.4 per 1000 students at the ANU (slightly higher than the 36.6 per 1000 students in 2017 and slightly lower than the 39.7 per 1000 students in 2016). Accordingly, the percentage of the total ANU student population contacting the Office over the past three years has held relatively steady at approximately 4%. No comparable data is currently available for the Australian university sector.

The Dean and Deputy Dean of Students would welcome the opportunity to present detailed information relevant to individual Colleges to help inform actions to improve student outcomes and student experiences.

Previous recommendations

The following comments and recommendations were made in the 2017 Dean of Students Annual Report:

- We believe the lack of a dedicated office for advice to international students is a handicap to our international student cohort. We believe that such an office could greatly assist international students with their particular needs. We also see such provision as an opportunity to develop closer engagement between international and domestic students, to the benefit of both, through network building facilitated by such an office. We believe the loss of this office several years ago has brought inefficiencies in responding to international student queries. Students, this Office, support services and academic advisors in Colleges have felt the loss of this office and its specialist, experienced advisors.

Recommendation: *We recommend that the Division of Student Administration [now the Division of Student Administration and Academic Services or DSAAS] and the Division of Student Life consider a new vision for an International Student Office, addressing specific needs within the cohort as well as integration opportunities between international and domestic students.*

[2018 update: there has been no move in relation to re-establishing a dedicated International Student Office. This remains our recommendation. We note, however, that DSAAS clearly recognises the need to support this cohort and has undertaken a variety of innovations and practices (including in relation to appointing staff) that are aimed at better servicing International Students. The DoS office looks forward to working with DSAAS to further this aim as we see the provision of careful, specialist and dedicated support to this cohort as a priority for the future.]

- Numbers of students suffering debilitating mental illness, in particular depression and anxiety, apply for late withdrawal from courses they have failed or not completed. Many such students are unsuccessful in their applications due to the lack of supporting documentation obtained during the months immediately following the semester census date and prior to the end of the semester. Understandably, medical certificates obtained in following months are not currently accepted. However in this complex area and it can take some time before students recognise the severity of their illness and seek clinical advice and treatment.

Recommendation: *We recommend that the Division of Student Administration [now DSAAS] review late withdrawal assessment validation for students when the basis of the application is mental illness, particularly depression and anxiety. We suggest this review consider different approaches to validation taken by some universities to see whether these alternative models may be applicable at ANU.*

[2018 update: The DoS Office acknowledges that DSAAS has undertaken considerable work in this area. We also acknowledge the constraints of the legislative framework within which decisions in relation to late withdrawal must be made. However, this Office continues to endorse this recommendation.]

- In 2016 academic College advisors, staff from the Division of Student Life and the Division of Student Administration, undertook significant work to refine the early intervention process for students deemed to be at academic risk. This excellent initiative is now established and continued through 2017. We applaud this work and the continuing efforts to make contact with such students to help ensure they receive timely and appropriate advice and avoid subsequent grievance issues. We are unable to comment whether this process has significantly impacted on the problem. Certainly many of the students attending the DoS Office have comments on their transcripts noting that they have been sent an early intervention email. Few transcripts note whether the students took up the advice to meet with an academic advisor. We are unaware whether this is because they did not attend a meeting, or that the meeting was not noted on the transcript.

Recommendation: *We recommend that academic Colleges note such meetings on student transcripts. Recording this information would assist at an institutional level to help target future initiatives aimed at students who struggle to make academic progress.*

- **[2018 update:** On page 14 of this Report, there is a full discussion of the Early Intervention mechanisms employed by the University in relation to students' academic progress and some inconsistencies across Colleges when recording how students respond to such interventions. Whilst there has been a significant improvement in the recording practices in some academic Colleges, there has been little change in others. Accordingly, we recommend that the 2017 recommendation put to the Student Administration Managers Meeting that the comment "EIAN" (indicating that early intervention meetings with an academic advisor had been attended by a student) be recorded on student transcripts be adopted as a common and consistent practice across all academic Colleges.]
- We again raise the concern that HDR students and supervisors have no requirement to establish explicitly agreed expectations between them. We continue to meet with students who hold grievances toward their supervisors that may have been avoided if clear expectations had been established at the outset.

Recommendation: *We recommend that the Dean HDR and the members of the HDR Committee consult with Research Schools about instituting processes to put in place individualised expectation statements between students and their supervisors. We suggest a requirement for supervisors to discuss expectations with their students and provide a written summary to their students with a copy to the School HDR convenor.*

[2018 update: significant progress has been made in relation to this recommendation, particularly the creation and introduction of the HDR Supervision Development Framework by the HDR Committee. The framework encompasses supervisor development, supervisor registration, supervisor recognition and reporting components. Under the framework, from 2020, Candidate-Supervisor Agreements must be negotiated early in a student's candidature and those agreements must be reviewed annually. The HDR Supervision Development Framework is also discussed on page 19 of this report.]

Recommendations for Annual Report 2018

- In light of previous recommendations in relation to HDR Supervision agreements, this Office is concerned that all existing HDR students receive the benefit of the new mandated Candidate-Supervisor Agreement protocol.

Recommendation: *We recommend that Candidate-Supervisor Agreements be instituted for existing students as well as for incoming HDR candidates.*

- Students (and teaching staff) continue to experience problems associated with the holding of formal deferred and supplementary exams in Week 1 of the following semester. This is particularly so when exams that, for the main cohort, took place in early November of Semester 2 are not scheduled for the deferred or supplementary cohort until late February the following year. Students report significant stress associated with having assessment hanging over their heads over the long summer period as well as some disruption to the new semester's learning as a result of the current timing of these examinations.

Recommendation: *Whilst we are aware of the constraints and pressures on the Examinations, Graduation and Prizes Office (EGAP) as a result of the timing of graduation ceremonies, and of a variety of other complicating factors, we recommend that consideration be given to holding deferred and supplementary exams close to the end of the relevant semester. Students are required to be available to attend campus during the exam period and so holding deferred exams at the very end of the exam period may be an option. Alternatively, we recommend that consideration be given to holding deferred and supplementary exams in N or O week of the following semester.*

Overview

Understanding the Dean of Students' Role

The DoS Office confidentially receives complaints, concerns or enquiries about alleged acts, omissions, unreasonable or unfair conduct and broader systemic problems within the scope of student experience at ANU. The Office operates as an independent entity within the institution, providing impartial consideration of the issues brought to it. The Office provides guidance, assistance and support to students who have a grievance or who are challenged by a major problem that is interfering with their academic progress.

We aim to provide high quality, client-focused services for preventing, managing, and resolving issues that are impeding students' progress and, through active participation in informal grievance resolution, assisting students to develop the ability to prevent, manage, and resolve future issues.

The role of the Office is to listen, offer options, encourage and facilitate informal grievance resolution, provide guidance in the case of formal grievance pathways, and provide advice or facilitate access to the range of support services within the University including academic, administrative and wellbeing services.

Conflict in a large institution is inevitable and it can be very expensive for the University if internal and external formal grievance processes are regularly deployed to deal with that conflict. The processes of formal grievance through the multiple steps within the University, further steps external to the University and, potentially, legal challenge can involve many University employees and many hours of staff time. The range of issues that the Dean of Students routinely sees (which could escalate through such processes) include behaviour of staff or students; academic assessment; policies and procedures; conflict arising through poor communication; mismatched cultural expectations; perceived discriminatory practices or insensitivities; harassment and bullying.

The areas for conflict raised with the DoS Office have a common thread of perceptions of unfairness. Frequently the student believes they have been treated unfairly by the institution or by one or more individuals within the University. The issue becomes a battle in the mind of the student and, sometimes, in the minds of affected staff. Bringing the issue to the DoS Office gives us an opportunity to listen, guide and, if appropriate, to act to help the student address the issue informally or to assist by liaising directly with the area of concern.

Our goal is to bring an independent eye to the complaint and to facilitate a fair outcome. We check whether correct process was followed, whether the process was transparent, the decision was impartially made, the outcome reasonable and the principles of natural justice observed. We provide policy and procedural advice to staff members involved in handling complaints, thereby helping to ensure compliance with the Student Complaint Resolution Policy and Procedure as well as other relevant Rules, policies and procedures.

The ANU established the DoS Office at ANU in 1965, the first Australian university to establish such a position. The Office acts to maintain successful, widespread informal grievance resolution processes within the University, leading to low numbers of complaints going through formal grievance pathways. The Office has a key role in assisting the resolution of issues more

quickly, more cheaply and with a greater likelihood of a positive outcome for all parties than would be achieved through formal grievance procedures.

The Office is sometimes a first port of call for students. However, perhaps more frequently, students are referred by other students, staff support services, student representatives, Academic and Residential College staff and occasionally family members.

Not all students attending the DoS Office have a grievance with staff or processes of the University. Beyond the student ombudsperson role of considering grievances, the Office also has a role in assisting students who experience a major life event or situation that profoundly impacts their ability to progress with their studies. These situations include sexual harassment or assault, domestic violence, clinical depression and anxiety, self-harm, serious financial difficulty, family stress, disability, cultural difference and mental illness.

The Office is typically not the first stop for these students, nor is it the final destination. Our office works closely with staff in ANU Counselling, Access and Inclusion, residential colleges, and academic Colleges to help support and assist such students in the most efficient and streamlined way possible. Referrals are made from these areas to the Office so that we can facilitate academic interventions or other arrangements. These arrangements include assisting with applications for Special Consideration or Late Withdrawal, or negotiating alternative class arrangements (in the case of sexual harassment, sexual assault or domestic violence). Similarly, the DoS Office refers students to ANU support services for their professional assistance as well as to ANUSA and PARSA services as appropriate.

In recent years the DoS Office has raised the Office profile with staff, acting as a resource and source of advice to staff who encounter difficult student situations. This builds on the Office's role of chairing meetings of the Case Management Group, the team tasked with evaluating and determining action in some cases of disruptive or dangerous behaviours by students or in some critical incident situations. Core members of the Case Management Group in 2018 included the Dean and Deputy Dean of Students, the Registrar (Student Administration), Registrar (Student Life), Head of ANU Counselling, Senior Counsel from the ANU Legal Office, the Head of Security, the Manager (Access and Inclusion) and other relevant senior staff depending upon the specific circumstances of the case.

The DoS Office also holds informal meetings with College Associate Deans (Education), Associate Deans (Student Experience) and Associate Deans (HDR) several times a year to help share and disseminate best practice in implementing University policies and procedures, particularly as they relate to improving the student experience and in managing difficult student situations.

Finally, the Office contributes to the development of new policies and procedures relevant to the student experience. Most commonly, this role occurs through service on various University-wide Committees (including the Academic Quality Assurance Committee (AQAC), and the Higher Degree Research (HDR) Committee). However, the Office also provides suggestions and feedback directly to the Academic Standards and Quality Office (ASQO) and liaises frequently with ASQO staff.

Looking forward

The load on the DoS Office significantly increased over the 10 years between 2008 and 2017, with a slight dip in 2018. The slight decrease may be partially explained by the period of change in the DoS Office in 2018. Long-standing Dean, Associate Professor Paula Newitt (who previously worked three days a week) retired mid-year and the process of finding her replacement meant that the new Dean, Associate Professor Miriam Gani, did not commence until 2 October 2018. During the interim period, the Office was frequently staffed by only one Dean, the Deputy Dean, Dr Peter Hendriks. Chart 1 below shows that accelerated growth in the load carried by the DoS Office is evident from 2014, with a slowing of that rate in 2017 and the previously mentioned dip in 2018. Overall, there has been an increase of 750% in student contacts in the period 2005 – 2018. Staff full time equivalent (FTE) grew very modestly from 0.8 to 1.72 FTE over this period. Since October 2018, there have been 2 FTE staff in the Office.

As the University moves to a higher proportion of students living on campus there is an observably greater load on this office and other services, particularly ANU Counselling, Access and Inclusion and the Health Centre. Clearly off-campus as well as on-campus students access the Office. However residential students, by definition, live on campus 24/7. The issues, challenges and any trauma that these students experience or encounter on any day become the institution's issues, challenges and trauma as well over the full week, including outside business hours. Students naturally look for support from and response by the University and in turn the University undertakes to provide a safe, enriching and supportive experience for all students. This does lead to the need for provision of significant support resources, allocated and applied strategically and efficiently.

Progress v Problems

Much progress has been made in the past four years in the provision of advice to students through online portals as well as through various student-facing offices of the University. We greatly appreciate the excellent work undertaken in the Examinations, Graduations and Prizes office (EGAP) in their review of deferred exam applications. Similarly the team within the Division of Student Administration who review late withdrawal applications have our utmost respect. Both teams approach these draining tasks with rigour and fairness. We appreciate their preparedness to contact students in cases of insufficient information and to advise students of what they need to do to improve their applications. Other staff in Colleges, particularly student administrators, academic advisors and College Associate Deans are extremely helpful to our office, responding quickly to address student grievances that we bring to their attention.

In recent years, the DoS Office has witnessed a change in the detail of enquiry and grievance brought to the Office. As commented upon in the 2017 Annual Report, there is a marked improvement in the information and processes concerning standard student administrative and degree requirements (enrolment, program leave, graduation, degree requirements) provided to students. These are communicated clearly and are easily accessible online. Processes such as eForms on ISIS appear to run well. We no longer field general enquiries in these areas to any significant degree although grievances about decisions made in these areas grew significantly in 2017 and further increased in 2018 (see Chart 8 below).

We are anticipating that the numbers of contacts with the Office will stabilise at around the 2017 to 2018 level. We believe this stabilisation will be, at least in part, due to the significant improvements in administrative processes and communication initiatives in the past two years.

On the other hand, an ongoing issue whose effects continue to be felt in this Office and elsewhere across the University is the closing of the dedicated office for advice to international students. We continue to believe that the loss of this office several years ago has been detrimental to international students.

As was commented upon in the 2017 Annual Report, the very stretched resources in ANU Counselling, the Health Centre and the Access and Inclusion Office continues to result in students needing their support seeking assistance from the DoS Office first because we can often give them an appointment before these other support services are able to. Typically, those students were already highly distressed and had experienced very significant problems with their academic progress by the time they sought our help. Their academic failure was often associated with their inability to cope with their studies due to mental illness, health issues or other associated factors. We do not provide counselling, medical support or specialised assistance to accommodate disability. In many cases students sought our help in responding to an invitation to “show cause” as to why they should not be excluded from the University. Amongst other advice and action, we often assisted with applications for Late Withdrawal - the latter frequently turned to as a last resort to save students from exclusion. Those applications were only sometimes successful.

Late Withdrawals

2018 data shows a similar number of students seeking assistance with Late Withdrawal applications as was the case in 2017 (128 students in 2018; and 134 in 2017). This follows a major increase in the number of students requesting assistance with Late Withdrawal applications between 2016 and 2017 (there were 80 student requests of this nature in 2016). Whilst the information provided online to guide students with their applications is extremely clear and concise, nevertheless, students who were unwell or were facing exclusion often sought assistance from our office with this process. We assisted by providing guidance on their application requirements and by providing feedback on their draft application statements prior to submission. The guidance we provided was no different to the information provided online. However, it is clear these vulnerable students actually need a person to walk them through these steps in what was frequently a very high stakes process for them. As was previously commented on in the 2017 Annual Report, many of these students presented with debilitating depression or anxiety, either as a pre-existing condition prior to enrolment or developed while a student at the University.

We acknowledge that considerable work has been undertaken in this area. In particular, DSAAS, working within the constraints of the legislative framework, has reviewed and revised practice when assessing late withdrawal applications and continues to provide clear guidance to students about what is required in their applications. However, since we are recommending, again, that consideration be given to finding new mechanisms to assess Late Withdrawals where depression and anxiety are in play, we will quote the relevant paragraphs from the 2017 Annual Report below:

We do not underestimate the challenge faced by staff in the Division of Student Administration who are tasked with assessing these applications and sympathise with the difficulties these staff face in making decisions on applications for Late Withdrawal. We were aware of numbers of student applications made on the basis of significant depression and anxiety. Often, the students' conditions were so severe that they were completely incapable of engagement with their studies or anything else. In some cases their applications were unsuccessful due to the lack of supporting medical certificates obtained during the key period of the relevant semester. Medical certificates obtained after the conclusion of the semester were not sufficient to support a successful application for Late Withdrawal – understandable given the current procedural requirements. However it is very common that individuals can take quite some time to appreciate that they need help for depression and anxiety – well after the damage has been done with respect to their academic progress. There is a tendency for people suffering in this way is to isolate themselves, again leading to a lack of options for verification of their mental health status. This issue has been noted nationally and internationally and some universities are considering other ways to manage withdrawal processes, substantiation and decisions for this category of ill health. We recommend that the Division of Student Administration review late withdrawal assessment validation for students applying on the basis of mental illness with reference to the literature in this area and alternative models being applied in some other universities.

Behavioural Conduct/Misconduct

Whilst somewhat lower than in 2017 (where 225 complaints concerning behavioural conduct, misconduct and bullying by staff or students were made), the 204 complaints of this kind were still worryingly high, particularly by reference to the 115 complaints made in 2016. As was explained in the 2017 Annual Report, these cases often consume significant resources within the DoS Office and are often difficult and complex matters requiring multiple contacts with the student and others. These cases included allegations of bullying of HDR students by their supervisors or other research group members, major behavioural issues involving individual students, and allegations of sexual harassment or sexual assault. The most complex cases involve misconduct or behavioural issues alongside mental health issues. This Office is expecting such complex cases to continue to be a feature of our future workload.

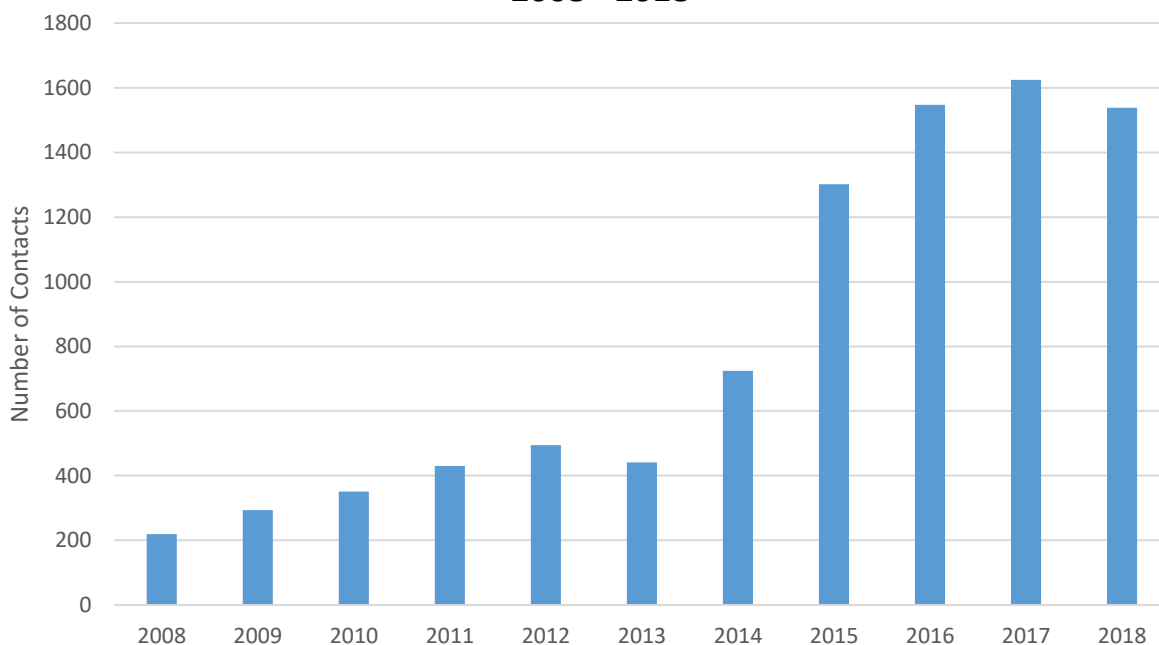
The Numbers – an overview

The DoS Office was established in 1965, commencing operation from 1 January 1966. The Office provides independent, impartial, confidential advice and informal dispute resolution to students of the ANU. In addition, the Office acts as a resource and source of advice to staff who encounter difficult student situations. The Dean of Students is a member of and normally chairs the Case Management Team, tasked with evaluating and determining action for critical incidents and cases of disruptive or dangerous behaviours involving students. The Office participated in 8 case management processes in 2018. The DoS Office provided input to a range of senior governance committees of the University, making recommendations for amendments to policies and procedures as informed by matters raised with it by students and staff. During 2018, the Dean for the first half of the year, Paula Newitt held Fellow status at the residential colleges, Bruce Hall and Toad Hall. The Deputy Dean of Students also holds Fellow status at Toad Hall. The new Dean of Students, Miriam Gani, is a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy.

The chart below records the number of contacts with the DoS Office from 2008 to 2018. Data in this table includes repeat visits rather than simply providing a head count of individual students. All subsequent charts in this report relate to individuals (head count).

Chart 1

**Contacts with the Dean of Students Office
2008 - 2018**



Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
No. Visits	219	293	351	430	495	441	724	1303	1547	1624	1538

In 2018, 900 students made 1538 visits to the DoS Office. This cohort represents approximately 4% of the total ANU student population (38.4 students per 1000 students). Of the total number of individuals who contacted the Office, 296 (32.8%) required multiple visits, a slight decrease from the percentage in 2017 (36%) but still significantly ahead of the percentage in 2016 (27%). Multiple visits can indicate multiple associated concerns held by students as well as ongoing or entrenched problems. There is clear evidence that situations brought to the Office by students over the past three years are increasingly complex in nature. Whereas the 934 individuals who contacted the Office in 2017 raised 2369 issues or grievances, in 2018, a fewer number of individuals (900) raised a higher number of issues or grievances (2435). In 2016, a total of 816 students raised 1533 issues with the Office.

The closest international comparison to the work of the ANU DoS Office is the work undertaken by Student Ombudspersons in Canadian Universities. The Association of Canadian College and University Ombudspersons (ACCUO) reports an annual caseload of approximately 1% of the total student population in Canadian Universities. There is no comparable data currently available for the Australian university sector.

In addition to student visits, about 125 staff sought advice or assistance relating to difficult situations involving students. This is the highest number of contacts with this Office by staff in any year. The number in 2017 was 110.

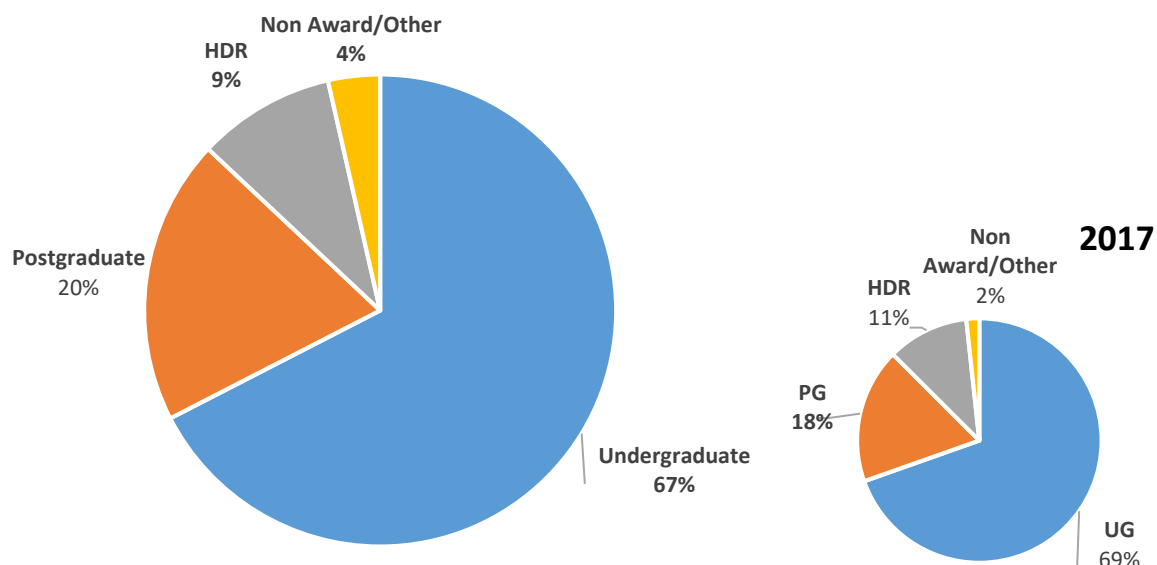
Summary of Contacts with the Dean of Students' Office 2018

Individuals by Student Career

Chart 2 below shows a percentage summary of individuals who contacted the DoS Office by student career (Undergraduate, Postgraduate, HDR and Non Award) in 2018. The 2018 percentage summary of individuals is compared, via a second pie chart, with those who contacted the Office in 2017. Data in the table below the charts sets out the number of individuals that contacted the Office from each cohort of students for each of the years 2017 and 2018 along with the percentage of the total student contacts with the Office that each cohort represented for 2018. The final column sets out the percentage of students in each cohort across the whole of the University population for the year 2018.

Chart 2

Grievances by Student Career 2018



Student Career	No. Students 2018	No. Students 2017	% in grievance cohort 2018	% in ANU cohort 2018
Undergraduate	607	650	67	55
Postgraduate	176	167	20	34
HDR	85	101	9	11
Non Award/Other	32	16	4	0.3
Total	900	934		

The picture of student contacts with the DoS Office across career cohorts remains remarkably consistent with 2017. As was the case in previous years, in 2018, undergraduate students continued to be represented at a higher rate in contacts with the DoS Office than their proportion of the total ANU student population (67% to 55%). As in previous years, this correlates with students presenting with issues across the grievance categories of: appeal, results, special consideration, late withdrawal, academic advice and progress. After a significant increase, in 2017, in the prevalence of students seeking advice around modifying a course outcome or result (grade appeal, special consideration or late withdrawal) than in previous years, 2018 data show a further increase in this category over 2017 figures. In terms of specific cohorts, this data reflects an increase in the numbers undergraduate students seeking advice in these areas as well as a greater proportion of students overall presenting with these issues.

In previous Annual Reports, the DoS has commented that lack of timely access to or awareness of academic advice support during the first two weeks of semester when students are finalising their enrolment was an emerging issue that could lead to ongoing academic progress concerns. In 2016 significant work was undertaken by College academic advisors and staff from the Division of Student Life and the Division of Student Administration to refine the early intervention process for students deemed to be at academic risk. This initiative is now established and has continued through both 2017 and 2018.

This Office applauds the work done in this area and the continuing efforts to make contact with such students to help ensure they receive timely and appropriate advice and support. However, as indicated in the Annual Report for 2017, we remain unable to comment upon whether this process has significantly impacted on the problem. Many of the students attending the DoS Office have comments on their transcripts noting that they have been sent an early intervention email. However, what happens after that is not always apparent from those transcripts. In 2017, a recommendation was put to the Student Administration Managers Meeting that the comment “EIAN” (indicating that early intervention meetings with an academic advisor had been attended by a student) be recorded on student transcripts. This was, at least in part, in order to be able to monitor the potential impact of these communications and meetings on a student’s academic progress. However, this recommendation has not been taken up consistently across all academic colleges with the result that only some transcripts note whether the students took up the opportunity to meet with academic advisors whilst others are silent. We continue to recommend that Colleges note such meetings so that better information can be gathered at an institutional level to help target areas for improved engagement and support to students. It is particularly important for Colleges to adopt similar practices to making such records on student transcripts, as patchy records do not allow for a clear picture to emerge.

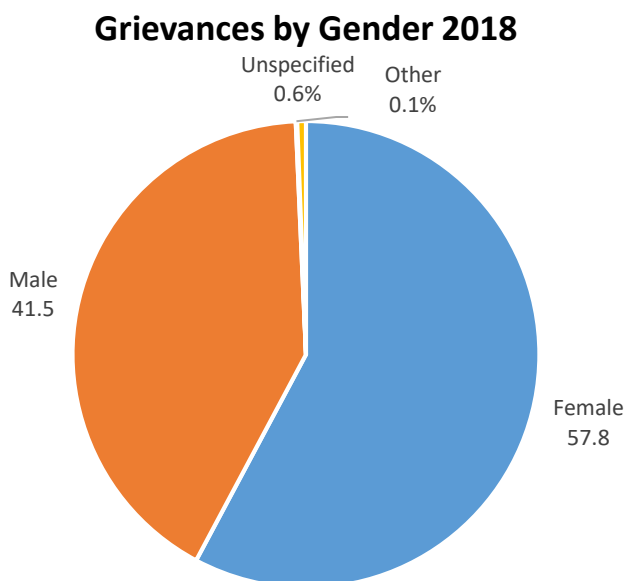
Postgraduate coursework students continue to be significantly underrepresented in contacts with the DoS Office (i.e. 20% of individuals contacting the DoS Office as opposed to 34% of the student population at ANU). However, the actual number of postgraduate students presenting with a difficulty was slightly higher in 2018 than 2017 (176 as opposed to 167) and the trend over the past three years has shown a steady increase. We believe this is linked to a greater awareness of the Office amongst this cohort.

The proportion of individuals presenting to the DoS Office who were HDR students in 2018 was slightly down on 2017 (9% of the total grievance cohort as opposed to 11% in 2017). However, the number of HDR students in the grievance cohort remains broadly proportionate to the percentage of HDR students in the whole of University cohort: 11%.

Individuals by Gender

Chart 3 below shows a percentage summary of individuals who contacted the DoS Office in 2018 by reference to gender (to one percentage point). Data in the table below the charts sets out the number of individuals that contacted the Office by recorded gender for each of 2017 and 2018 along with the percentage of students in the DoS contact cohort by gender for 2018. The final column sets out the percentage of students in gender cohorts across the whole of the University population for 2018.

Chart 3



Gender	No. Students 2018	No. Students 2017	% in grievance cohort 2018	% in ANU cohort 2018
Female	520	538	57.8	53
Male	373	393	41.5	47
Other	1	0	0.1	0.05
Unspecified	6	3	0.6	0
Total	900	934		

Before 2017, gender did not appear to be a significant factor influencing the overall reporting of issues to the DoS Office. The data in 2016 showed a small over-representation of female students but this trend became more marked in 2017 (where there was a ratio of 58% to 42% females to males presenting to the DoS Office). The trend has held steady in 2018 with 57.8% of students presenting at the DoS Office being female (as compared to 53% of the overall ANU student cohort - identical to that in 2017) and 41.5% being male (as compared to 47% of the overall student cohort - again, identical to 2017).

Gender differences continue to be apparent in specific grievance categories (see Chart 8 below) and in specific career cohorts of students. In 2018, 64 female HDR students presented to the DoS as compared with 21 males. By contrast the gender breakdown for male and female HDR students in the whole ANU cohort is 50:50. Amongst the HDR cohort that contacted the DoS Office, 30 female students presented with supervision grievances as compared with 9 male students. Other grievance categories where a gender bias was apparent largely replicated the observations made in the 2017 Annual Report: reports of sexual harassment or sexual assault (a strong over-representation of female students); undergraduate students reporting interpersonal conduct issues with other students (an over-representation of male students); and academic advice (an under-representation of male students). On the other

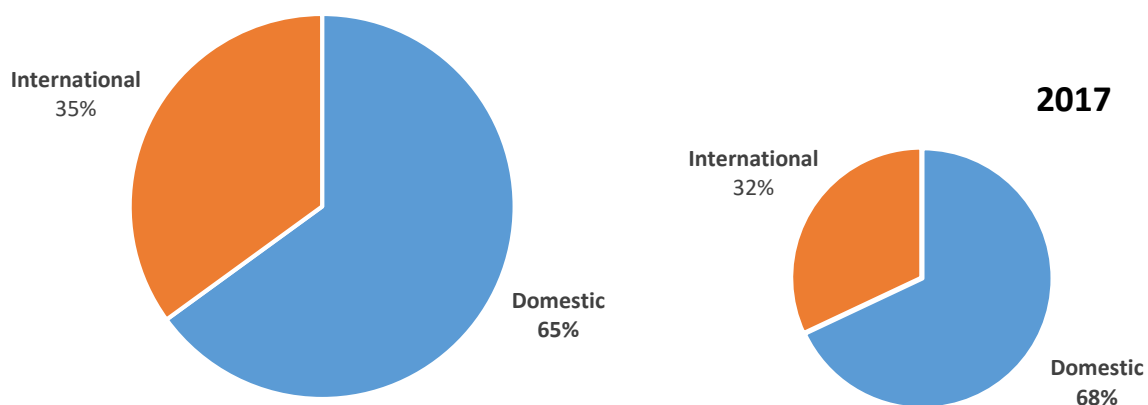
hand, a grievance category where a gender bias had previously been evident in 2017 (an under-representation of male international students reporting mental health issues) showed a significant change in 2018. Of the 123 male international students who presented to the DoS Office, 28 (or 23%) reported (though often reluctantly) that they were experiencing mental health issues. This compares with 216 students (or 24%) of a total of 900 of students presenting to the DoS with mental health issues in 2018.

Individuals by Residency

Chart 4 shows a percentage summary of the individuals who presented to the DoS Office by reference to their status as domestic or international students. The 2018 chart can be compared to the second pie chart, which shows a percentage summary of the residential status of individuals who contacted the Office in 2017. Data in the table below the charts sets out the number of individuals that contacted the Office by residency for each of 2017 and 2018 along with the percentage of students in the DoS contact cohort by residency for 2018. The final column sets out the percentage of students in international and domestic cohorts across the whole of the University population for 2018.

Chart 4

Grievances by Residency Status 2018



Residency Status	No. Students 2018	No. Students 2017	% in grievance cohort 2018	% in ANU cohort 2018
Domestic	588	635	65	63
International	312	299	35	37
Total	900	934		

There has been a steady increase in the number of international students seeking assistance from the DoS Office over the past two years. The percentage of the grievance cohort represented by this group has increased from 27% in 2016, to 32% in 2017 and to 35% in 2018. This is almost on par with the cohort representation across the University (37%). The increase is a very welcome one and coincides with efforts being made with respect to this student cohort (including with student leaders) to raise the profile of the Dean of Students' Office and the assistance it provides.

For every year since 2014, Annual Reports of this Office have commented that international students disproportionately presented with severe academic progress issues at a late stage, rather than accessing assistance from the DoS when they first experience academic problems. These late-presenters typically contact the Office only as a result of having been excluded from their programs following the invitation to show cause to the Academic Progress Committee. Students at this late stage of the process attend our office after receiving written advice of their exclusion, with the advice letter telling them that they should seek assistance from the DoS Office if they are considering a procedural appeal of the exclusion. It is highly unlikely that we will find a basis for a procedural appeal and we can offer little assistance other than to investigate if there are grounds for the student making a late withdrawal application. The figures for 2018, however, show no clear difference between the international undergraduate student cohort in regards to grievances relating to exclusion and the domestic student cohort. In 2018, 37 domestic undergraduate students (or 6.3% of the total domestic DoS grievance cohort) and 18 international undergraduate students (or 5.7% of the total international DoS grievance cohort) presented to the Office following exclusions from their program.

These are still worrying numbers in that they reveal that, despite early intervention strategies being deployed by the Division of Student Life and Colleges, a proportion of undergraduate students are unlikely to seek or take up offers or opportunities for early intervention support from this Office. However, for the first time, there is no clear evidence that international students are disproportionately represented in that group.

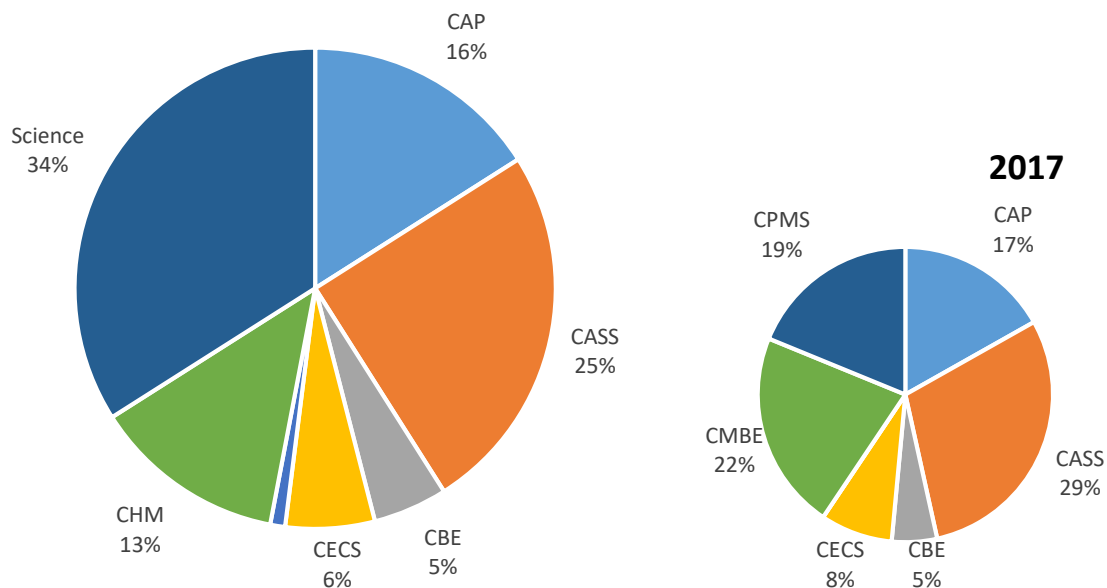
Individuals by Student Career and by College

Higher Degree Research Students

Chart 5

Chart 5 shows a percentage summary of the individual HDR students who presented to the DoS Office by reference to the academic Colleges in which they were pursuing their research studies. The 2018 chart can be compared to the second pie chart, which shows a percentage summary of individual HDR students who contacted the Office across academic Colleges in 2017. Data in the table below the charts sets out the number of individual HDR students that contacted the Office by academic College for each of 2017 and 2018 along with the percentage of the total DoS HDR contact cohort from each academic College for 2018. The final column sets out the percentage of the total University population of HDR students hosted in each academic College for 2018.

Higher Degree Research Grievances by College 2018



College	No. Students 2018	No. Students 2017	% in grievance cohort 2018	% in ANU cohort 2018
CAP	14	17	16	18
CASS	21	30	25	21
CBE	4	5	5	5
CECS	5	8	6	11
CoL	1	0	1	2
CHM*	11	22 (CMBE)	13	13
CoS*	29	19 (CPMS)	34	29
Total	85	101		

Note: Percentages have been rounded up.

* The re-configuration of the Joint Colleges of Science between 2017 and 2018 has impacted the distribution of HDR candidates between the two Colleges. CASS: College of Arts & Social Sciences; CAP: College of Asia & the Pacific; CBE: College of Business & Economics; CECS: College of Engineering & Computer Science; CoL: ANU College of Law; CHM: College of Health and Medicine (2018 onwards); CoS: College of Science (2018 onwards); CMBE: College of Medicine, Biology & Environment (2017); CPMS: College of Physical & Mathematical Sciences (2017).

Whilst the number of higher degree research (HDR) students who contacted our office is down on 2017, the percentage of the total ANU HDR cohort that sought support or advice from the DoS Office has remained broadly consistent over the past three years (3.3% of the total HDR cohort in 2018, 3.6% in 2017 and 3.4% in 2016). In addition, the complexity of the case management with which we were involved was high, with two students being supported over 12 and 11 contacts/appointments respectively during 2018.

As in 2017, a significant majority of grievances presented by HDR candidates (51 of 85) involved supervision issues and/or lack of academic progress. The trend for students to present earlier in their candidature, commented on in the 2017 Annual Report, continued in 2018. Early presentation is welcomed by this Office as it allows time for remedial intervention and the possible salvaging of students' candidature. Also as previously noted, innovations over the past several years (such as stronger induction processes and Thesis Boot Camp) were appreciated by HDR students presenting to the DoS Office as positive developments. The work begun in 2018 to establish the Graduate Research Office (which commenced operations in February 2019) and to improve the consistency of supervision practices across the University will likely see further positive outcomes going forward.

We are still concerned, however, that this cohort of students continues to present to our office with very high levels of stress. Our work with HDR candidates often involves complex case management over multiple visits. Where students are prepared to be identified, case management can include working with Associate Deans (HDR) in Colleges as well as liaising and sometimes mediating with HDR Convenors, HDR Chairs, supervisors and panel members and College professional staff. Case management is most complex when there has been a breakdown of the supervisory relationship. This can mean that support from our office is required over many weeks and months to re-negotiate the relationship, to re-build student confidence and to ensure that academic progress is made.

However, the majority of HDR students are not prepared to be identified to their Colleges due to their concerns that any complaint that they make may adversely affect their studies.

The nature of our support and advice with the HDR cohort is to focus on academic progress when working with the student. This often involves helping the student to develop project and time management skills as well as providing them with support and strategies aimed at improving the quality of their relationship with their supervisors. We refer students to support services such as ANU Counselling and the Academic Skills Centre, where appropriate, and can mediate between the student and their supervisor and/or liaise with HDR Convenors where students are happy to be identified. The aim is to help the student to become productive as well as to support the rejuvenation of their working relationship with their supervisor. This process can address the original grievance with which the HDR student presented.

It is important to note that some cases dealt with by this Office involve students who are suffering significant mental illness. That illness can either exist prior to their enrolment in their HDR program or can develop in the course of their candidature. In such cases, the stress experienced by both students and staff is significant.

One HDR student claimed their supervisor bullied them – a drop from the three cases reported in 2017 and the 9 cases reported in 2016. However, ten grievances involved complaints about the conduct of staff and its impact on student well-being and progress (in 2017, nine HDR

students made such complaints). As in 2017, the conduct was characterised as either harassment or insistent, harrying behaviour or, conversely, student neglect. In the latter case, students saw themselves as a low priority for supervisors who were too busy to give them their attention. Some complaints involved problems associated with the delegation of supervision to post-doctoral fellows. There were also nine complaints of poor conduct by fellow students (often in the laboratory environment).

A recurring theme was the lack of clear and agreed expectations of how the supervisory relationship would work and a lack of overt recognition of the need to negotiate supervision and learning styles in the interests of both parties. Many students complained that feedback on their work was either not consistent or not in a useful form. This type of complaint has been commented on in previous Annual Reports. This Office applauds the hard work done in this area by the Higher Degree Research Committee in developing the HDR Supervision Development Framework. Consistent, rigorous supervision practices across the University will, we believe, both minimise supervision-related grievances and enhance the experience of the entire HDR student cohort.

The prevalence of HDR student complaints is broadly aligned with the numbers of HDR students in each College although there is some over-representation in CASS and CoS and some under-representation in CECS. We welcome opportunities to provide more detailed information specific to individual Colleges at the request of HDR Convenors.

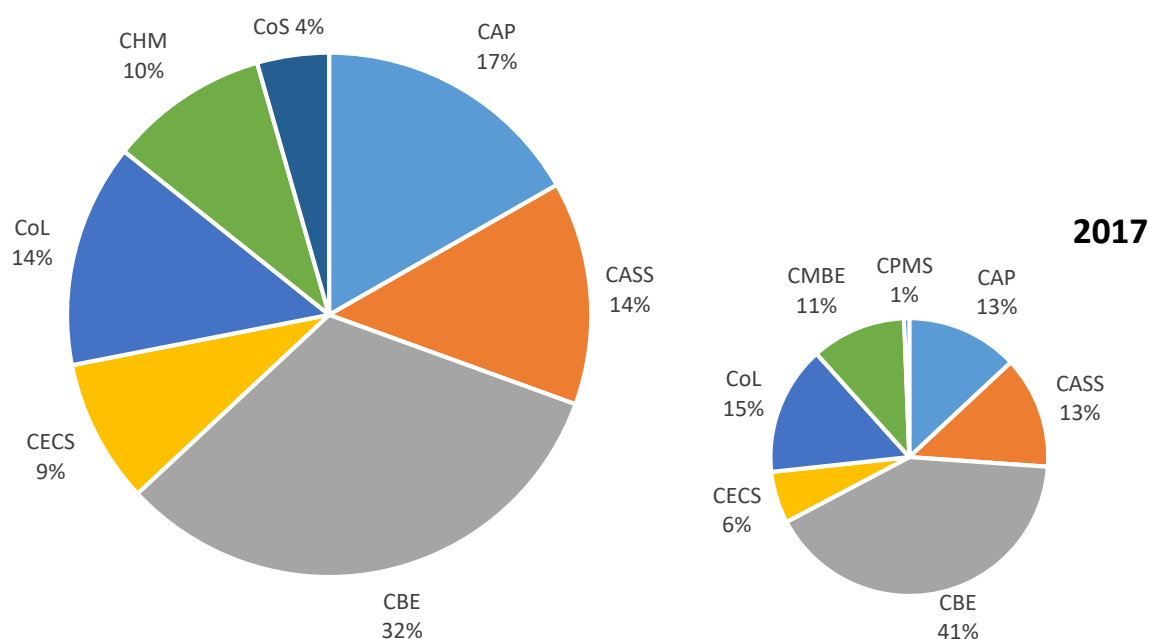
As stated in the 2017 Annual Report, we invite staff to consider the DoS Office as a general resource and, in the HDR context, a particular source of advice in relation to managing difficult supervision situations.

Postgraduate Coursework Students

Chart 6

Chart 6 shows a percentage summary of the individual postgraduate coursework students who presented to the DoS Office by reference to the academic Colleges in which they were enrolled. The 2018 chart can be compared to the second pie chart, which shows a percentage summary of individual postgraduate coursework students who contacted the Office across academic Colleges in 2017. Data in the table below the charts sets out the number of individual postgraduate coursework students that contacted the Office by academic College for each of 2017 and 2018 along with the percentage of the total DoS postgraduate coursework contact cohort that was enrolled in each academic College for 2018. The final column sets out the percentage of the total University population of postgraduate coursework students enrolled in each academic College for 2018.

Postgraduate Coursework Grievances by College 2018



College	No. Students 2018	No. Students 2017	% in grievance cohort 2018	% in ANU cohort 2018
CAP	30	22	17	15
CASS	24	22	14	7
CBE	58	69	33	42
CECS	15	10	9	7
CoL	24	25	14	19
CHM*	17	18 (CMBE)	10	7
CoS*	8	1 (CPMS)	4	4
Total	176	167		

Note: Percentages have been rounded up.

* The re-configuration of the Joint Colleges of Science between 2017 and 2018 has impacted the distribution of students between the two Colleges. CASS: College of Arts & Social Sciences; CAP: College of Asia & the Pacific; CBE: College of Business & Economics; CECS: College of Engineering & Computer Science; CoL: ANU College of Law; CHM: College of Health and Medicine (2018 onwards); CoS: College of Science (2018 onwards); CMBE: College of Medicine, Biology & Environment (2017); CPMS: College of Physical & Mathematical Sciences (2017).

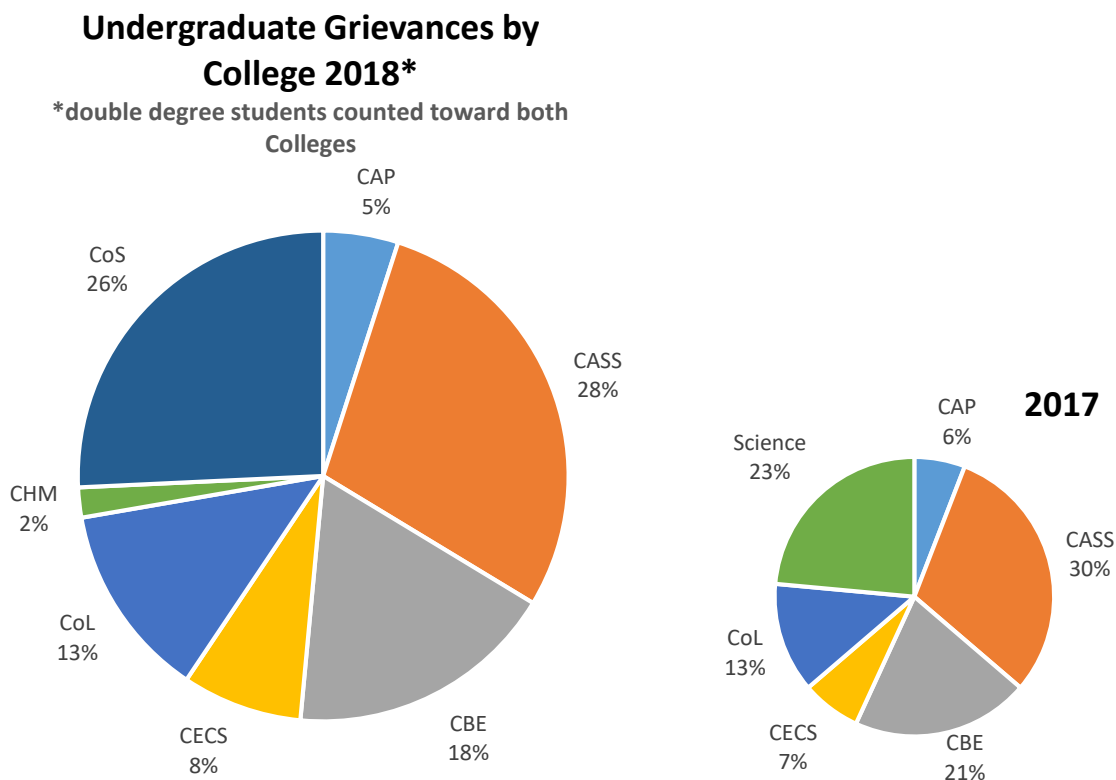
Notwithstanding an increase in the number of postgraduate coursework students using the services of this Office in 2018 over 2017 (176 compared with 167 contacts) postgraduate coursework students continue to be under-represented (see the commentary accompanying Chart 2 above).

The data indicates that by comparison with the percentage of the ANU distribution of this cohort across Colleges, a disproportionate number of students in CASS (and to a lesser extent) CMBE present to this Office. There has been an increase in the number of students from CAP and CECS seeking our assistance and a marked decrease in complaints from students studying CBE programs as compared with 2017. We attribute this to the work done by the College in response to the 2017 Annual Report. Colleges can request more detailed de-identified information to assist in identifying key issues for action.

Undergraduate Students

Chart 7

Chart 7 shows a percentage summary of the individual undergraduate students who presented to the DoS Office by reference to the academic Colleges in which they were enrolled. Where students are enrolled in double degrees, they are recorded against both Colleges in which they are studying. The 2018 chart can be compared to the second pie chart, which shows a percentage summary of individual undergraduate students who contacted the Office across academic Colleges in 2017. Data in the table below the charts sets out the number of individual undergraduate students that contacted the Office by reference to their academic Colleges in 2018 and 2017 as well as the percentage of the total DoS undergraduate contact cohort that was enrolled in each academic College for 2018. The final column sets out the percentage of the total University population of undergraduate students enrolled in each academic College for 2018 (again, remembering that double degree students are recorded as enrolled in two Colleges).



College	No. Students* 2018	No. Students* 2017	% in grievance cohort 2018	% in ANU cohort 2018
CAP	41	50	5	5
CASS	264	271	28	32
CBE	144	183	18	20
CECS	67	60	8	12
CoL	103	112	13	11
CHM **	15	N/A	2	9
CoS**	210	210 (Science)	26	11
Total	844	650		

* Double degree students are counted against both Colleges leading to double counting of some individuals.

** The re-configuration of the Joint Colleges of Science between 2017 and 2018 has impacted the distribution of students between the two Colleges.

CASS: College of Arts & Social Sciences; CAP: College of Asia & the Pacific; CBE: College of Business & Economics; CECS: College of Engineering & Computer Science; CoL: ANU College of Law; CHM: College of Health and Medicine (2018 onwards); CoS: College of Science (2018 onwards); Science (College of Medicine, Biology & Environment + College of Physical & Mathematical Sciences) (2017).

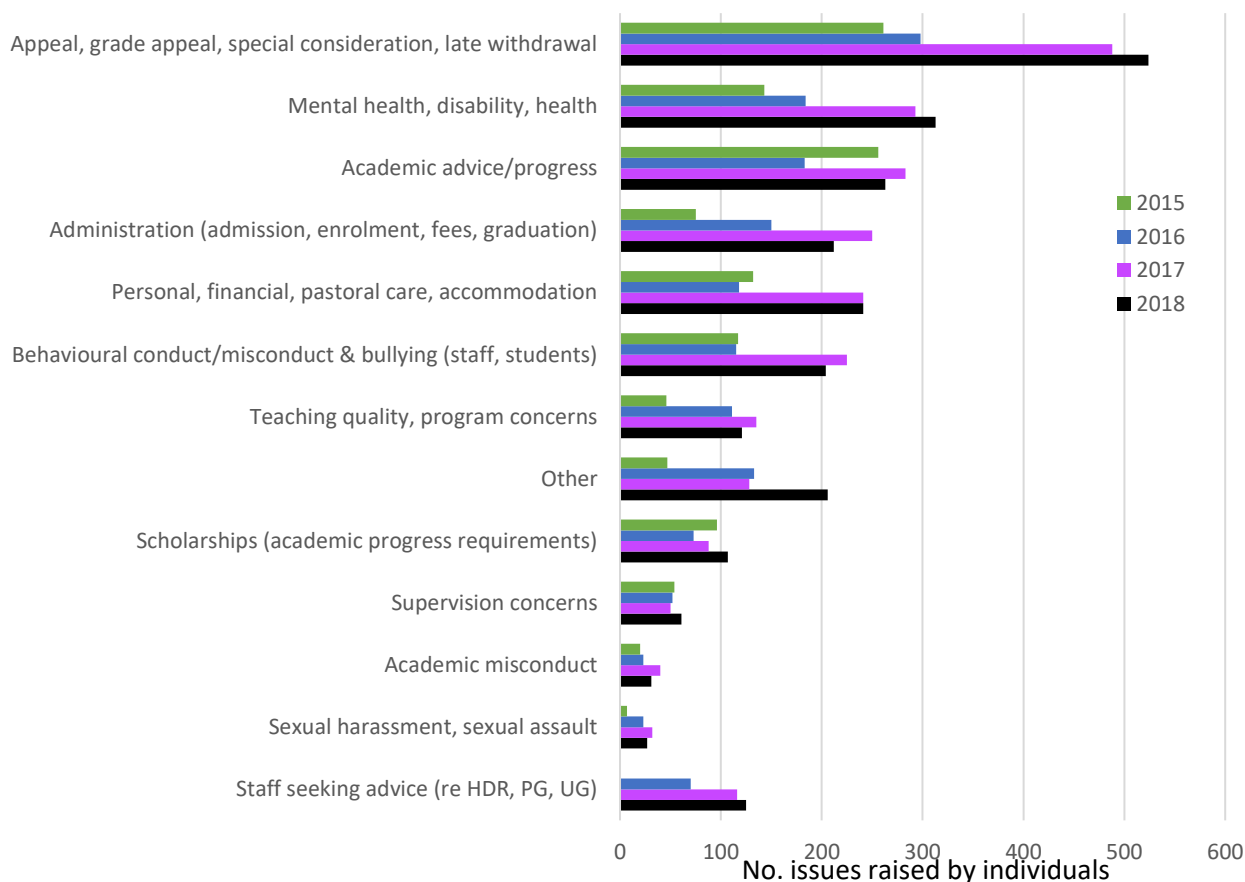
Due to the double counting of students in double degrees, the number of individuals represented by the total of 844 in the table above is around 639. Whilst DoS contacts show a broadly representative spread across the Colleges, the numbers in the table above do not reveal the College about which a double degree student may have a grievance (if the grievance relates to a College at all). The Colleges are differentiated once the category of issue is taken into account (see the category groups set out below) and detail can be provided to individual Colleges on request.

Distribution of Grievances

Chart 8

Chart 8 provides a comparison of the number of issues raised by students by reference to the type of issue or grievance with which they present to the DoS across the years 2015 to 2018. A single contact with our office may raise multiple issues. The data below the graph sets out the number of issues raised across the listed categories for each of 2017 and 2018.

Type of issue/grievance



Type of Issue/Grievance	2018	2017
Appeal, Grade Appeal, special consideration, late withdrawal	524	488
Mental health, disability, health	313	293
Academic advice and progress	263	283
Administration (administration, admission, enrolment, fees, program transfer, graduation)	212	250
Personal, financial, pastoral care, accommodation	241	241
Behavioural Conduct/Misconduct & Bullying (staff, students)	204	225
Teaching quality, program concerns, assessment requirements	121	135
Other	206	128

Scholarships (academic progress requirements)	107	88
Supervision concerns	61	50
Academic misconduct	31	40
Sexual harassment, sexual assault	27	32
Staff seeking advice (HDR, PG, UG)	125	116

As in previous years, the majority of grievances or issues brought to the DoS Office in 2018 revolved around academic advice, academic progress, contesting of grades (grade appeals) or removal of fail grades (through late withdrawal). The 2018 figures show a further increase over the record high figure recorded in 2017. As was also commented on in the 2017 Annual Report, the categories of mental health/disability/health (the second most frequently raised issue in both 2017 and 2018) and personal/financial circumstances were frequently associated with issues of academic progress and grievances concerning grades. We have noted, before, that mental illness in particular is a major factor in a range of grievances and situations. A continuation of that trend was evident in 2018, with an increase in this category over the 2017 figures.

In addition to the two increased categories already noted for 2018, there were four other categories that recorded increases: contacts associated with scholarships; supervision concerns; the “other” category; and, the already commented upon (and welcome) increase in staff seeking advice from this Office. The category involving matters relating to personal/financial/accommodation circumstances remained the same in 2018 after a big increase in 2017. Within this category, however, there were some notable variations between 2017 and 2019, with an increase in broad pastoral care contacts and a decrease in those relating to accommodation. In 2017 this Office saw a concerning number of students reporting homelessness, and the increase in the number of on-campus accommodation places in 2018 seems to have helped alleviate this. On the other hand, this Office was concerned that the increase in the number of students living on campus would lead to an increase in the sorts of issues that arise when large numbers of young people live in close proximity to one another. Our 2018 data does not indicate that this happened.

The increase in the “other” category may be indicative of a broader range of issues being brought to this Office than in the past. On the other hand, it could reflect a somewhat different approach to the recording of contacts against established categories by new or short-term staff members in the wake of the departure of the previous Dean of Students in July 2018. In any event, this development will be monitored in 2019 and new categories may be considered should this prove necessary. Increases or sustained numbers in the other categories mentioned above reflect the complexity or interplay of issues impacting individual students. In particular, as in 2017, there was an increased number of students presenting to our office who were making poor academic progress, were experiencing poor mental health (commonly depression and/or anxiety), and were also experiencing financial, personal or “other” issues. As previously noted, there was a continued association of HDR and other supervision

grievances with issues relating to student mental health. Students in this complex category were also often accessing other University support services, including ANU Counselling, Access and Inclusion and, sometimes, Academic Skills.

As in previous years, a portion of the “complex” issue cohort exhibited very demanding behaviour that impacted on other students as well as a wide range of staff across the University (going well beyond the support services mentioned above). Staff affected included residential college staff and senior residents, College student administrators and academic advisors, security staff, academic staff, the DoS Office, ANUSA and PARSA staff and student representatives.

The number of mental health issues that were reported by students to this Office continues to increase. In 2018, 18.5% of the students (a total of 167 individuals) who contacted the DoS Office in 2018 reported that they were experiencing a mental illness that was impacting their academic progress. This was a further continuation of the growth in this category recorded since 2014: 81 students in 2014; 93 students in 2015; 133 students in 2016; and 158 students (or 17% of DoS student contacts) in 2017.

The DoS Office continues to work closely with ANU Counselling Centre staff to support these students. As noted in previous annual reports, the nature of these conditions means that many students do not have supporting documentation to cover the possibly extended period when they were clearly affected but had not yet recognised their condition or sought treatment. This kind of documentation is important when University staff assess student applications for extensions, deferred assessments and late withdrawals and this Office continues to be concerned that these students may find it hard to meet the documentation requirements for such accommodations by the University when they are most needed.

The contacts listed under grievance category 12 (Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault) show that there were 27 students who disclosed incidents of sexual harassment or sexual assault in 2018. This category includes historic disclosures (i.e. incidents that took place before a person was enrolled at the ANU) - a new sub-category that we have added to our database mid-way through Semester 1 2018. Historic disclosures account for 3 of the incidents disclosed to the DoS. In addition, the numbers in the table above represent alleged perpetrators as well as students disclosing an incident. Accordingly, in 2018, the overall frequency of reported incident is approximately 92.5% of the number shown in the chart.

The 27 sexual assault or harassment incidents represent a decrease from the 32 incidents in 2017, although the number of incidents is still above the 23 disclosures received in 2016. This Office welcomes the efforts of student associations and the University in response to the Human Rights Commission report *Change the Course: National Report on Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment at Australian Universities*, released on 1 August 2017. In particular, we welcome the creation of the Respectful Relationships Unit (RRU), which has taken a leadership role in relation to supporting students in relation to disclosures, instituting reporting processes and working across the campus to promote respect and culture change. We look forward to continuing to work closely with RRU staff.

Grievance Category Groups:

The categories and sub-categories of grievance that are recorded by the DoS Office are as follows:

1. Academic Grievances

Appeal; Grade appeal; Exams – academic; Exams – administrative; Late withdrawal; Special Consideration/Extensions/Deferred Exams.

2. Mental health, disability, health**3. Academic advice and progress**

Academic Advice; Academic Progress; Academic Progress – Probation; Academic Progress – Suspension; Academic Progress – Exclusion; Graduate Studies advice; Overseas Exchange.

4. Administration (admission, enrolment, fees, graduation)

Administrative issue; Admission; Enrolment; Fees; Graduation; Timetabling; Program transfer.

5. Personal, financial, pastoral care, accommodation

Accommodation; Financial; Pastoral Care; Personal; Time Management.

6. Behavioural conduct/misconduct & bullying (staff, students)

Bullying - staff of student; Bullying - student of staff; Bullying - student of student; Campus Security; Conduct – Staff; Conduct – Student; Stalking; Harassment; Social Media.

7. Teaching quality, program concerns

Program concerns; Teaching quality; Online course sites; Fieldwork; Feedback re assessment; Assessment requirements.

8. Other

Details of any matter outside of the other categories.

9. Scholarships (academic progress requirements)

Scholarship; Scholarship – Encouragement; Scholarship – Probation; Scholarship – Suspension; Scholarship – Show Cause.

10. Supervisory concerns

Supervision – HDR; Supervision – Hons.

11. Academic misconduct**12. Sexual Harassment; Sexual Assault**

Sexual assault, Sexual harassment; Historic disclosure.

13. Staff seeking advice

Regarding: Undergraduate; postgraduate; or higher degree research students.

General Comments

Grievances or issues brought to this Office commonly fall into five types:

1. Grievances that relate to academic progress, grades, special consideration and late withdrawal (which could be reduced by students having greater access to College-based academic advisors as well as student administrators). Issues of perceived lack of fairness, often associated with rigid application of rules without consideration of context, are frequently reported by students.
2. Students struggling to make good academic progress and life choices as a result of significant mental illness or previously unrecognised disability.
3. Personal issues that consequently impact on academic progress. Parental expectations and requirements for some international students in particular can determine the focus of study rather than a student's aptitude and discipline interest. Financial difficulties experienced by both domestic and international students can lead to students undertaking substantial hours of paid employment which in turn can impact on academic progress. Academic advice, options for financial support, consideration of program leave and pastoral care are key components of advice and encouragement to this group of students.
4. HDR students are commonly highly stressed when they present to this Office and need someone just to listen to them in the first instance. Discussions about time management, project management and thesis structure and expectations frequently follow. These students sometimes work in comparative isolation and are frequently in need of substantial encouragement, positive feedback and practical approaches to enabling progress with their studies and enabling productive communication with their supervisor.
5. Critical incidents and follow-up evaluation and action. These situations can involve the Case Management Group.

Dean of Students
Associate Professor Miriam Gani

Deputy Dean of Students
Dr Peter Hendriks