

Position description

Greater together 

Position title:	Senior Student Advocate
Institute/School/Centre/ Directorate/VCO:	Chief Learner Experience Office
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
Reason for fixed-term	Replacing an employee on leave
Probation period:	This appointment is offered subject to the successful completion of a probationary period.
Further information from:	Drew Burns, Acting Manager, Student Advocacy and International Student Support Email: d.burns@federation.edu.au
Recruitment number:	JR100833

Position summary

Student Advocacy is a key contributor to student satisfaction, retention and success at Federation University, providing independent, confidential 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 promote and deliver on-campus Student Advocacy at their home campus, and virtual delivery to students at all campuses, maintaining an appropriate client caseload in addition to other duties. Building and maintaining stakeholder networks internally and externally, the Senior Student Advocate will support students to successfully continue their studies at the University and engage constructively with both students and staff in the resolution of student concerns. This role is also responsible, in conjunction with the Manager, for generating/interpreting data and reports.

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). The successful candidate will have a proven track record in a person centred, strengths- based approach in a student focused environment. They will also need experience of data/research analysis and writing professional service reports.

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.

This position is responsible for provision of in person advice and support for students at their home campus and email and virtual support for other students across the University. Travel between campuses will be required on occasion.

Portfolio

The Chief Learner Experience Office is responsible for the Student Experience from pre-admission through to graduation. With a focus on increasing student numbers through both attraction and retention. The portfolio looks after Marketing, Student Retention, Innovation and Engagement, Digital Channels and Strategy and Student Services such as Inclusion, Equity, Wellbeing, the Contact Centre, and Student Administration.

The Chief Learner Experience Officer leads the portfolio with current members of the Senior Leadership Team including:

- Director, Marketing and Growth
- Director, Retention, Innovation and Student Experience
- Director, Digital Channels and Strategy
- Director, Student Services and Registrar.

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, Gippsland, and the Wimmera, we deliver world-class education and facilities. With the largest network of campuses across Victoria, 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 identifying and understanding student issues within the wider University context. Work with students to identify achievable outcomes and guide them in self-advocacy, endeavoring to resolve issues at an informal level before proceeding to formal measures. Where required, make appropriate and targeted referrals to other support services.
2. Across the service, lead and contribute to service improvement projects and initiatives
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 and International Student Support. Analyse data, prepare briefings and case summaries on current and systemic issues and work collaboratively with the Manager, Student Advocacy and International Student Support to address these through relevant and appropriate University channels.
4. 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.
5. 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.

6. Lead data generation and analysis within the Advocacy team. The position will be responsible for reporting on Student Advocacy's activities, generating and presenting insights to both the Student Advocacy team and the broader University. This will include gathering data and insights from students, systems and staff, and preparing reports.
7. In collaboration with colleagues at other campuses, develop and deliver a range of communication and promotion activities 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.
8. 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. Understand and follow the additional requirements for confidentiality and independence inherent to Student Advocacy work.
9. Reflect and embed the University's strategic plan, and operational purpose, priorities, and goals.
10. 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 (OHS) 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, and collaboratively with the Manager, Student Advocacy and International Student Support and International Student Support. They are responsible for the provision of timely, accurate and expert advice to students seeking information and support around 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.

The Senior Student Advocate is responsible for analysing and resolving a range of issues raised by students requiring the interpretation and application of relevant legislation, policies, procedures and processes and 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 and International Student Support and International Student Support. 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. All Advocates are responsible for the advice they provide.

All Student Advocacy staff are 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. Exceptional attention to detail and precise, professional and personable communication is critical in this role.

The Senior Student Advocate will demonstrate high levels of integrity, discretion and ethical standards. Adherence to the Federation University Privacy Policy. An understanding of confidentiality and professional boundaries are paramount, particularly given the service's need for independence from University decision-making.

Position and organisational relationships

The Senior Student Advocate reports to the Manager, Student Advocacy and International Student Support and works collaboratively across campuses with both the Manager and other staff in the service. This position 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. This position will manage the sensitivities surrounding often conflicting priorities of the student and other stakeholders of the University, and deftly manage relationships with stakeholders across the institution.

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 advocacy, student associations or community organisations and data/research analysis; or
 - an equivalent combination of relevant experience and/or education/training.
2. Hold a valid Working with Children Check (WWCC) or hold a current registration with the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT).

Experience, knowledge and attributes

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. Demonstrated ability to gather data and stakeholder insights and to write reports and briefing papers to a professional standard.
7. Demonstrated capacity to harness personal resilience, working in a fast-paced environment with individuals in significant distress.
8. Demonstrated ability to communicate effectively, sensitively and professionally with students experiencing significant personal circumstances.
9. Demonstrated working knowledge and application of the Child Safety Standards.
10. Demonstrated knowledge and application of appropriate behaviours when engaging with children, including children with a disability and from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds.
11. Demonstrated alignment with the University's commitment to child safety.

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.