

Student welfare advice transcript

Whatever issue we'll work with you. Sometimes that will require a referral to other organisations or units within VU, like student counselling, student equity or student advisory. Sometimes we refer those issues that you bring to us out to external providers, could be housing, could be financial advice, could be a referral to a consumer agency. Could be efficacy work where we help you with an outstanding bill where you can't afford to pay it. It depends on your issues.

What we do do is focus on what your problems are, and what you bring to us and try and get you a resolution.

In relation to international students, we assist them with their tuition fees. There are some students who are unable to pay their tuition fees on time due to issues that may occur when their fees are initially due.

What we ask students to do is go and see the Student Service Centre firstly and discuss the issue with them and they can help them get a fee extension.

The important thing that students must do is they have to come and see us before the HECS census date which is the 31 March and the 31 August. If they fail to come and see us before those dates we can't assist them.

When a student attends our office looking for assistance often it is around financial issues. They may have an outstanding electricity or gas bill that they are struggling to pay. We give them advice and suggestions on ways to fix their spending up and then we also help them advocate to those providers who they owe money to.

It can also be around just general living advice, it varies, but it's about saying to students "if you've got a financial concern or an issue, come and see us". You know, we're not judgemental. We'll give you clear advice and options and then support you when you make those choices. But the important thing is, come and see us before you do something.

What we do in welfare is we make sure that when a student sees us, if it's not something that we work directly with, we make sure that we can refer them on to either an internal support agency, or to an external agency where they know that there's going to be some follow up.

Victoria University has a very small loan program that's offered to students. The maximum is \$500. Students need to apply and they need to satisfy a Student Welfare Officer that they meet those requirements and that they can afford to repay that loan. It's an interest free loan. They need to be able to make fortnightly repayments. It's only when we come to the point where we can't find alternate ways to help you, that's when we'll approve a student loan.

We're available on every campus. We'd ask that you make an appointment because if you come straight into the office we may not be available and we'd hate to see that your time is wasted. Also I'd suggest you get your hands on the free student diary that Victoria University has. As well as the student welfare postcard and the 'Getting involved, getting help' booklet.