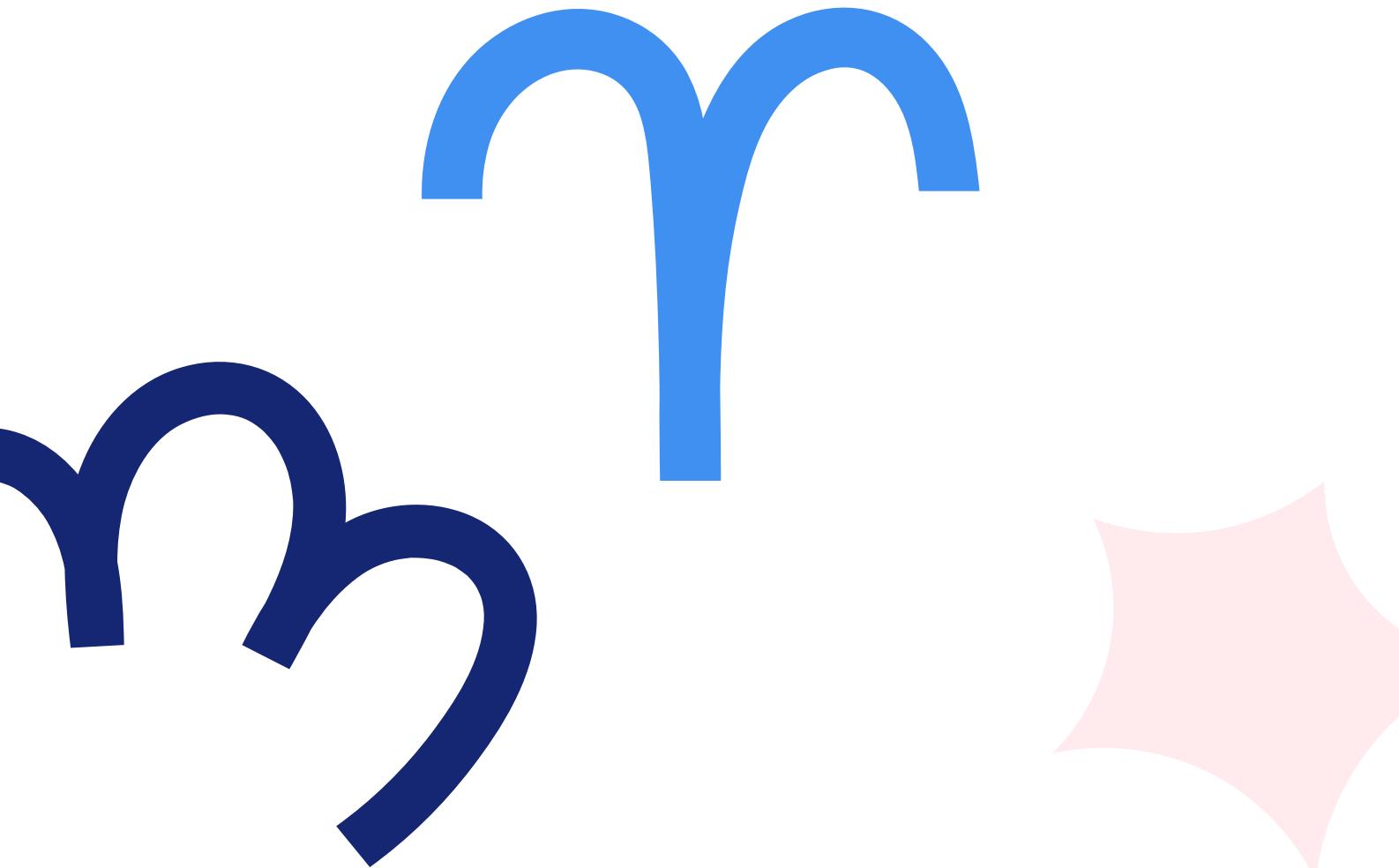




UNE Law Students' Society



Wellbeing Guide 2025



Message from Jaimie

Ladies and Gentlemen, Brothers and Sisters, Comrades and Friends,



I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself as the Social Justice and Equity Director for the University of New England Law Students' Society (UNELSS). I hope that Trimester 1 was kind to you, that you achieved what you hoped and importantly learned something new.

I am excited to share with you the UNELSS Wellness Guide, put together in conjunction with the wonderful Publications Director, Deb Russell. The purpose of this guide is to bring a variety of resources together to assist you to in accessing the useful services that UNE offer. You will find various support services available around mental health support, equity and accessibility support, and study support. For further information you can access the [Wellness Centre](#) in the UNE Students Services centre on the University of New England's website.

Within the pages of this Guide there is a wealth of information from Counselling and Psychological Services (CAPS), Student Accessibility and Wellbeing Office (SAWO) and Oorala Aboriginal Centre, including:

How to book in for a Wellness Check with a professional, qualified and registered psychologist. You can access hour long appointments with a psychologist after you have completed a Wellness Check.

A message from Oorala, sharing information and advice for First Nation students studying at UNE. They can assist you with tutorial support, individual and group tutoring sessions are available for on-campus and online students, as well as several scholarships and cadetships available.

Information on how you can secure a Study Access Plan (SAP), exam adjustments, lecture support, and access to assistive technology, as well as financial support options for eligible students.



The Wellness Guide follows the success of the Mindful Justice Conference held on campus in Armidale. I was fortunate enough to be able to attend and hear Professor Weisbrot, eminent legal scholar and law reform expert, Florence Thum, former dispute resolution lawyer, psychotherapist and certified trauma practitioner, Dr. Christina Platz, Senior Lecturer at the School of Law, RMIT University and an NMAS-accredited mediator, and Dr. Nina Hudson, Senior Research Fellow and Mcburnie Postdoctoral Fellow at the Tasmania Law Reform Institute. Each presenter brought a wealth of knowledge in their respective areas such as policy reform, therapeutic jurisprudence and mental burn out.

In addition to the enlightening speakers, attending the conference allowed me to explore the grounds of New England, visiting the School of Law and meeting the wonderful academic staff that make the Law School operate, meeting lecturers and tutors that have taught me throughout the years, I was able to explore the beautiful town of Armidale and most notably get to know fellow students. It was a wonderful experience, and I would highly recommend students take the opportunity to visit the University when the UNELSS holds future events. It encourages students to form connections which can be difficult to do when studying online.

My appreciation goes to everyone who has shared their time and information to assist in putting this Wellness Guide together. Further, I hope you all had a wonderful break and enjoyed some time away from study before Trimester 2. I wish you all the best with your future studies and hope you make the most of this incredible experience at Law School.

Warm regards,
Jaimie Harrison

Message from the Counselling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

Study does not happen in a bubble, it is not uncommon for personal circumstances, mental health, relationships, stress and adjustment issues to impact on your study. The UNE CAPS team are professionally qualified and registered psychologists and counsellors, who offer support no matter the stage of your student journey. We have a number of appointments available to support you with these challenges and improve your academic outcomes.



Wellness check

Students contacting the Counselling and Psychological Service for the first time (or those recontacting the service after 12months) are booked in for a "Wellness Check" appointment. This a 30-minute introductory appointment to discuss our services and assess how we can best support you.

[Book a Wellness Check here.](#)



Counselling appointments

Students can access hour long appointments with one of our psychologists or counsellors after you have completed a Wellness Check. Generally, up to three counselling appointments per trimester are available to students.

Please see our [Information for Clients handout. \(PDF, 80.79 KB\)](#).

You may want a 'study gym' session. Let the counsellor be your 'personal trainer' to help boost your confidence, overcome exam or presentation anxiety, manage your time, avoid procrastination, and improve your concentration and memory for effective exam revision.



For enquiries and to make an appointment:

Call [\(02\) 6773 2897](tel:(02)67732897), email studentcounselling@une.edu.au or book via [AskUNE](#).



Exam and Performance Anxiety

When faced with something we perceive as a challenge, like doing an exam or giving a public performance, it is normal to experience some physical arousal such as an increase in blood pressure and heart rate, or 'butterflies' in the stomach. A certain amount of this can enhance our performance. However, too much and we may start to feel 'anxious' and our performance can suffer. So here are quick tips to manage your anxiety.

Manage your thoughts or 'head talk'

How you think or your 'head talk' has a direct impact on how you act and feel. If you think that an exam or giving a public performance of your skills is a danger rather than a chance to demonstrate what you know and understand, your body can become more anxious than it needs to be. It is, therefore, important to identify, challenge and replace unhelpful thinking:

Challenge and replace any negative thoughts such as 'I will fail', with positive, realistic ones like 'I have prepared well for this task'.

Replace 'black or white', inflexible thoughts such as 'I must get a HD', with more flexible ones like 'It's okay to be nervous during my talk' or "I am learning from this task no matter what the result".

Replace any gloom and doom, catastrophic thoughts such as 'If I fail, my world will fall apart' with positive ones like 'I can seek help to ensure I do as well as I can'.

Manage your behaviour or 'act calm'

Apart from thinking in a positive and realistic way, you can change your behaviour or 'act calm' by taking practical steps that will minimise your anxiety:

If feeling anxious, let others know but don't panic others or let them panic you; fit leisure and pleasure into your daily routine, as variety and breaks in the day help you learn.

Avoid putting things off or staying in bed longer than you have to; eat moderately rather than over or under eat. Check that your diet includes essential vitamins – especially B and C and iron. Pace yourself rather than rush around.

In the case of exams...

Prepare a revision timetable for the 6 weeks leading up to the exam (for each topic within each of your units). Spread your revision over the first 5 weeks, and leave the 6th to go over your work again.

Summarise all the information for each topic within your units. Identify the gaps in your knowledge. Keep summarising your summaries until each one fits onto half to one side of an A4 page.

Look at and practice old exam papers under exam conditions.

Read the whole exam paper to fully understand the question(s), and to organise how much time you need for each question. Attempt all questions, move on if stuck, and come back later.

Manage your physical responses for 'body ease'

Not only can you change how you think and act in order to stay calm, but you can also put your body at ease by teaching it to relax. Firstly, it is important to recognise when your body is anxious. Notice if you have tightened muscles, trembling, shallow and/or rapid breathing, a furrowed brow or pursed lips, difficulty sleeping, skin complaints, headaches, increased blood pressure and pulse, stomach complaints, and sweaty palms.

Release body tension with movement - exercise, stretch, dance, walk, swim.

Use a simple 'centring' technique - relax your muscles by letting them go floppy (especially jaw, shoulders, arms and hands). Take 5 deep, slow, yet comfortable breaths, and tell yourself to be calm as you breathe out.

In an exam, tighten your muscles by putting your hands under your seat, pull the bottom of the seat up towards you, hold for a few seconds, then let go, consciously releasing all muscle tension as you do.

In between exam questions, use the 'centring' technique, stretch your hands and arms, and empty your mind of the last question so you can move onto the next.

Tips on emotional health for law students

Studying law is demanding in terms of the amount of time you need to devote to your studies and in terms of the high standard of academic achievement that is expected from you. Here are some quick and easy ways to help manage the emotional demands of being a law student.

Keep perspective

Don't catastrophize. Whether you get an HD, D, C, P or even an N – the world will still exist tomorrow. Marks are important to be sure, but they are not a matter of life or death, sickness or health. Go look at the sky or the sea and appreciate the vastness of time and space. It may help you to see that getting a lower-than-expected mark may not be the world-ending catastrophe that you think it is. You are not the sum total of your marks. They are not necessarily an indicator of how you will perform in your future career. They do not reflect the fact that you are a good or bad person, or whether you are kind, funny, generous, honest or warm.

Take breaks

Take short breaks when you study. When it comes time to study, make up a detailed plan of what you need to do and when you aim to do it. Aim to study for approximately 45-50 minutes at a time and then take a 10-15 minute break. Not only will this help to keep your mind fresh and active, but at the end of the day you'll be able to look back and see that you have actually achieved something.

Take longer breaks when you can. While it may not be possible to have a couple of days off before your exam or in the days before your assignment is due, when you do complete something, reward yourself with a decent amount of time in which you can relax and unwind. The more time you can give yourself then, the more energy and clarity you will have for when you need to really knuckle down.

Maintain good relationships with friends, family and classmates

Leave space for a life outside of study and for family and friends. However, if you do have to miss a few things because of your study commitments, reassure those involved that you will make it up to them and try to spend some quality time with them when you can.

Remember, you have classmates not competitors. It's human nature to want to know how we compare to others. Just because someone gets a higher mark than you does not mean they are better than you. It means their work was judged as better – this time. And just because one person got 78 it doesn't mean that your 74 is not still good. Compare yourself only to yourself as much as you can.

Manage your stress in a healthy way

It's important not to let yourself get overwhelmed and one of the best ways you can do that is to work out some strategies that can help you to relax and then do them regularly to avoid feeling stressed or burnt out. Alcohol, drugs and various stimulants are not the answer. They may offer short-term benefits but in the long run they will make you feel much worse and compound your stress.

Remember that you're in control

Don't feel trapped by what you have chosen to study. The date your assignments are due is not your decision but choosing to study is your decision. You can choose to leave, choose to defer or choose to switch to another degree. The word here is 'choose' and the person who makes that decision is you. Remembering that may help you feel more in charge of your life and your studies.

Deciding to complete a law degree does not necessarily mean you have to work as a lawyer. There are lots of examples of individuals who have completed law degrees and gone on to have successful careers in unrelated fields. If you're not sure law is for you then talk to the Career Development team at UNE Student Assist or to friends or family.

And finally...

Take one step at a time, pause to celebrate the little things and remember why you started.

Yes, it's hard work, but you have been accepted into law school, and you are on your way to a very rewarding career!



WHERE'S
NEXT?

PRACTICAL LEGAL TRAINING

Navigate your next step
with expert guidance.

With a lecturer, mentor, and
career coach by your side,
you're always supported.

Get the
guide



Message from Oorala

Our service

Our deadly and dedicated team at Oorala are on hand to provide information and advice about all aspects of studying at UNE. We are your key point of contact from the time you apply through to the time you graduate and every moment in between.

Tutorial Support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students

The Targeted Tutorial Assistance (TTA) Program provides tutorial support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The program offers both individual and group tutoring sessions for on-campus and online students. Tutorial sessions are aimed at mentoring students to develop their skills, especially during the transition into university studies.

Through the TTA program, you will be able to receive assistance with:

understanding the requirements of your course and selecting your units;

creating a study plan and time management skills;

academic writing and referencing skills;

preparing for exams; and

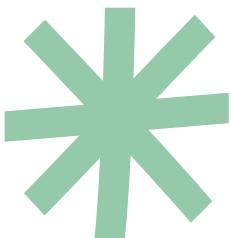
advice about adjusting to the university environment and advice regarding your assignments before you submit them for marking.

For further information regarding the TTA program, please see the [Targeted Tutorial Assistance Program](#) page.



Scholarships for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students

There are several scholarships and cadetships available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. For a comprehensive list of scholarships, please see the [Scholarships for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Students](#) and [Scholarships](#) pages for additional detail.



Indigenous Students Hub

We also have an online forum, "Indigenous Students Hub" where students can contact us via MyLearn. All current Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander students should have this tile on their MyLearn. We are always posting current updates for students regarding study support, community events, employment opportunities, scholarships, grants, internships etc. We also make posts when we have engagement activities planned. It also gives students an opportunity to connect with other First Nations students.

[The Hub - University of New England \(UNE\)](#)

Student testimony:

David Kernick, Wiradjuri man, lifeguard, ambulance driver, teacher and now a law graduate originally came to Armidale to study at the old Teachers College in the early 1990's. After working with in various jobs including in Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, David sustained a workplace injury to his back and decided as he could no longer teach young children he would again study, and chose a Bachelor of Laws.

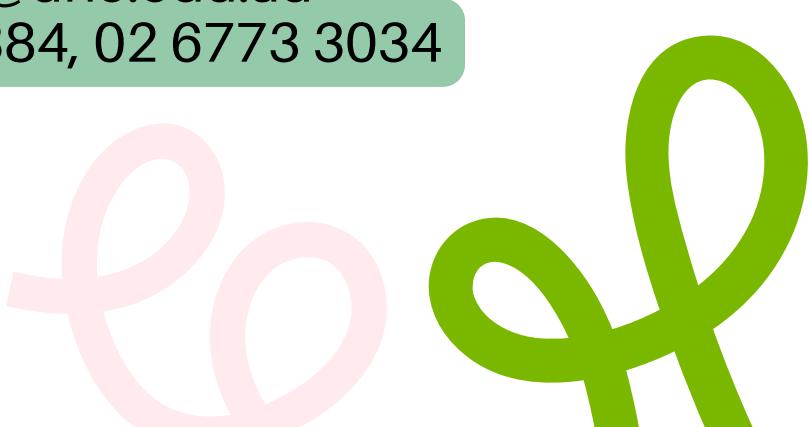
"Working and studying and enjoying life is never easy and it takes discipline to not get distracted. Oorala's tutoring support program helped me keep focus when needed."

When graduating in 2022 David said he "is very proud of his fourth qualification from UNE."

Students can contact Oorala via:

ooralasupport@une.edu.au

Ph: 1800 622 384, 02 6773 3034



Message from the Student Accessibility and Wellbeing Office (SAWO)



The Student Accessibility and Wellbeing Office (SAWO) - we are here to help and we're passionate about ensuring all our students have equal access to learning. We support students who:

have a disability and/or health condition;

are carers;

are victim-survivors of domestic violence;

reside in rural and remote areas;

are incarcerated;

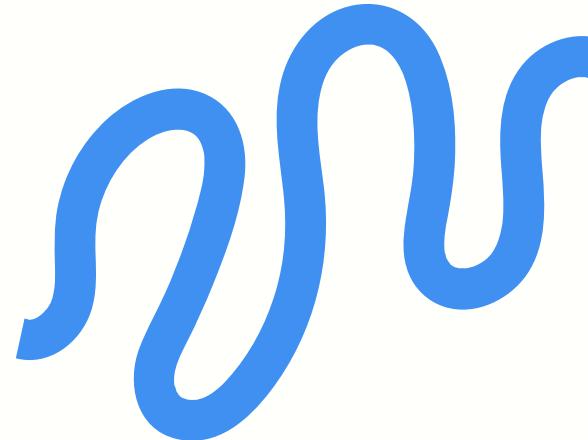
hold permanent humanitarian visas;

serve in the defence force or emergency services; or

are elite athletes.



Our friendly team consists of Accessibility and Wellbeing Coordinators and Advisors. Our Coordinators assist students in registering with our office to set up a Study Access Plan (SAP), which outlines reasonable adjustments to support participation in university life. Students can register with SAWO via our [registration webpage](#).



To be eligible for a SAP, you'll need to provide supporting documentation at the time of registration. You can find a list of acceptable documents on the registration webpage as well!

Our office is also able to provide temporary SAPs for students who are experiencing a temporary situation that is affecting their studies, such as pregnancy, broken limbs, surgeries or unexpected death in the family.

Once registered, we will work with you to develop a SAP, which may include:

assessment and exam adjustments;

alternative formatting;

access to assistive technology;

lecture support; and

library service.

Need support or have questions? Reach out - we're here to help!

For enquiries and to make an appointment:

[Book Online](#)

Alternatively, call our reception on +61 2 6773 2897 or email accessinclusion@une.edu.au.

Financial support

In relation to financial support, there are a number of options available. The UNE Scholarships Office provides an annual Support Fund for Students with a Disability Scholarship (SFSD) which was established to assist undergraduate students with a disability to study at UNE. Applications open once a year and typically close in January.

The Scholarships Office is also able to provide Student Emergency Assistance Funds, with more information found [here](#).



Specific study accommodation support is tailored to each student's individual needs.

However, to give you an idea...

Exam adjustments may include:

- access to rest breaks;
- able to wear coloured glasses;
- able to frequently look around the room;
- access to permitted materials in electronic format;
- able to be accompanied by a support person/animal;

...and the list goes on.

Lecture support may include:

- access to lecture slides and materials in advance;
- note-taking assistance; and
- access to professional captioning or transcripts.



Message from Advocacy & Welfare

Our service

Advocacy and Welfare is an independent, free and confidential service, exclusively for UNE students. Students can contact advocacy for advice on a wide range of concerns, such as navigating academic challenges and getting tax help. We are here to support students at every stage of their university journey. We provide support in navigating UNE's systems and empower you to act in your own best interests.

Some examples of things we assist with:

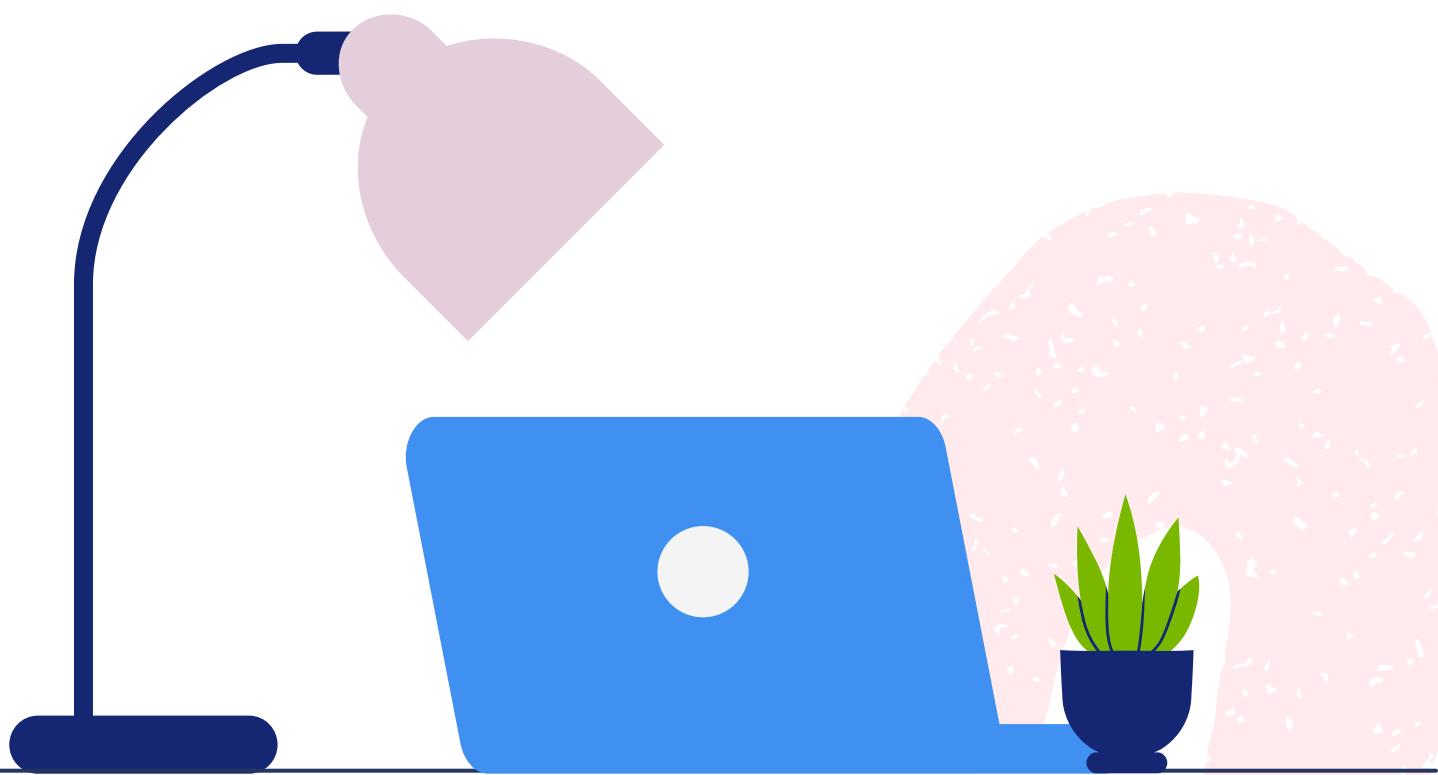
academic misconduct;

behavioural misconduct;

making a complaint;

Course Progression Reviews and Exclusion Notices;

Remission of Fees application;



Our service (continued)

Student Emergency Assistance Fund;

Assessment Appeals;

Special Consideration;

Withdrawal without Academic Penalty;

referrals to UNE Welfare or Counselling Services; and

tax help.

Getting in touch

You can contact our Advocates via phone on 02 6773 3116 or via email at advocacy@une.edu.au. You can also make a Teams Booking with one of our Advocates via the Teams booking [here](#). Check out our website, [Advocacy & Welfare | Advocacy & Welfare](#) for more information.



Thank you
for taking the time to
read our first
Wellbeing Guide.
If you have any
feedback or any
requests for future
guides, please reach
out to us at
lss@myune.edu.au