

6. Students and Student Support

PLANNING

- 6.1 The objects of the La Trobe University Act (1964) include reference to the services rendered to students by the University. Specifically:
- to serve the community ... by providing an institution in which all enrolled students will have the opportunity of fitting themselves for life as well as becoming learned in a particular branch or branches of learning; and
 - to foster the general welfare and development of all enrolled students.
- 6.2 In pursuance of these objects, the Strategic Plan 2004-2008 identifies as a strategic direction "to continue to attract and retain a capable, diverse student cohort and to build on the University's commitment to equity, access and participation for students".
- 6.3 The University has in place an Equity and Access Plan, and a detailed Indigenous Education Statement.

*SD1a: 'Strategic Plan
2004-2008'*

*SD6a: Equity and Access
Plan*

[http://www.latrobe.edu.au
/about/planning.html](http://www.latrobe.edu.au/about/planning.html)

*SD6b: Indigenous
Education Documentation*

IMPLEMENTATION

Structures – Academic

- 6.4 Policy development with respect to student academic matters is facilitated through AB and its sub-committees.
- 6.5 The Academic Services Division reporting to the DVC is responsible for the key administrative functions relating to students, in conjunction with the Faculties. Administrative support for metropolitan students is co-ordinated through the Student Centre, covering admissions, enrolment, re-enrolment, fees and HECS issues, examinations, graduations, records management issues and general enquiries.

- 6.6 Faculty and School Administrative Offices provide students with local course advice and support. Student Administrative Offices on the larger regional campuses mirror support services provided at the Bundoora campus. On smaller campuses some administrative processes are undertaken by the Academic Services Division or managed through School and Faculty Offices. Additional support services are provided to international students through the International Programs Office (IPO).

Structures - Welfare

- 6.7 Policy development with respect to welfare matters is overseen by the Equity Access and Personal Welfare Committee (EAPWC), a policy committee of Council, and its sub-committees:
- Student Services Advisory Group (SSAG)
 - Disability Advisory Committee
 - University Equal Opportunity Committee
 - Personal Security on Campus Advisory Committee
 - Indigenous Education Committee

SD6c: Terms of Reference for Equity, Access and Personal Welfare Committee

- 6.8 The PVC(EA) has the oversight of most welfare services. The Equity and Access Unit (EAU) promotes full and equal participation of all students and staff of La Trobe University, and aims to foster an environment free of discrimination and harassment. It is supported by campus based EAUs.

AD6a: Equity and Access Policies

Policies and Processes – Academic

Admissions and Enrolments

- 6.9 Admissions, enrolment and re-enrolment processes for undergraduate and postgraduate coursework programs are carried out by Faculties and Schools and co-ordinated by the Academic Services Division (via the Student Records Office and the Admissions, Examinations and Graduations Office). The selection of new students is managed by the Faculties under the direction of the Dean. Admission to postgraduate coursework programs is through direct application to Faculties.

Academic Progress

- 6.10 Faculties monitor the academic progress of all students. Where progress is not satisfactory according to predetermined academic progress rules, students are asked to *show cause* to justify their re-enrolment. The process for undertaking a show cause procedure is outlined in Regulation 19.1.

<http://www.latrobe.edu.au/legalservices/downloads/R19x1.pdf>

Student Misconduct

- 6.11 The University has in place two Regulations governing the management of student misconduct issues:

<http://www.latrobe.edu.au/legalservices/downloads/r16x1.pdf>

Regulation 16.1 Student Discipline and General Misconduct and
 Regulation 16.2 Student Discipline and Academic Misconduct

<http://www.latrobe.edu.au/legalservices/downloads/r16x2.pdf>

Academic Grievance Processes

- 6.12 Processes for dealing with grievances are in place at School, Faculty and University levels for undergraduate, coursework and research students. For students in taught programs, where issues can not be resolved by subject or course co-ordinators, the HOS and finally the Dean may become involved. Issues of academic progress are subject to Regulation 19.1, which also outlines grounds for appeal and the procedures to be followed.

<http://www.latrobe.edu.au/legalservices/downloads/R19x1.pdf>

- 6.13 For research students, the University has in place *Grievance Procedures and Appeals for Postgraduate Research Students* that refer a student initially to their supervisor, followed by the School's Postgraduate Co-ordinator, the HOS and the Dean. Failing a resolution, the Chair of the HDC(R) may then become involved, or an appeal made to the *Higher Degrees Appeal Committee*.

AD6b: *Grievance Procedures and Appeals for Postgraduate Research Students*

- 6.14 All students have recourse to the University Ombudsman throughout the grievance process.

Student Support and Welfare

- 6.15 An extensive range of student support systems is in place at LTU. At the Mildura and Albury-Wodonga campuses Student Services are shared with co-located TAFE institutions; at the Bendigo campus, a multidisciplinary Student Services team is employed.

Student Orientation

- 6.16 In recent years a number of initiatives to improve the transition to university study have been made. These include Faculty academic orientation programs, library orientation programs and on-line literacy training. FHUSS has run a transition program at the Beechworth campus and FRD has appointed a first year transition co-ordinator and trains volunteer student orientation leaders. IPO provides orientation programs for international students. In 2001 FLM conducted a survey of support services on a sample of 1,000 of their students.

ADóc: FLM Survey

Language Support Services

- 6.17 There are faculty and campus-based language and academic skills support units (LASU) and ESL support is also provided.

The Equity and Access Unit

- 6.18 Deaf Academic Services and the Disability Liaison Office provide support services to students and are based on the Bundoora campus. These services are also provided on regional campuses.

<http://www.latrobe.edu.au/eau/>

Counselling Services

- 6.19 A Counselling Service has been established on the Bundoora campus. Students on regional campuses have access to counselling services through their local EAU or the multidisciplinary Student Services Team at Bendigo campus.

Indigenous Support Services

- 6.20 Each teaching campus provides additional support to Indigenous students, usually through an Aboriginal Liaison Officer (ALO). On the Bundoora campus this is managed through the *Ngarn-gi Bagora Indigenous Centre* (NBIC) and on the Bendigo campus the *Aboriginal Tertiary Support Unit*. Both centres provide support to prospective students seeking advice and information on application processes, study at University, financial aid opportunities and transition. *The Indigenous Development Officer* is based on the Bundoora Campus (see Chapter 7).

<http://www.latrobe.edu.au/alo/>

Careers Advice

- 6.21 All campuses have made provision for careers advice for students, either through dedicated careers advisors or through Student Support Advisors. In addition, the Course and Careers Service (CCS) makes print and web-based services available University wide. At Faculty level careers related support made available to students includes cadetships in the FSTE and internships in the FHUSS. Some programs in FLM and FRD feature industry placements and FHS has clinical placements in a number of areas.

<http://www.latrobe.edu.au/careers/>

Other University Services

Childcare

- 6.22 Registered childcare facilities are available to students and staff on the Bundoora, Bendigo, Albury-Wodonga and Mildura campuses.

Spiritual Services

- 6.23 The chaplaincy service is available on Bundoora, Bendigo and Albury-Wodonga campuses. The University also houses Muslim prayer and washroom facilities on the Bundoora and Bendigo campuses.

Medical Facilities

- 6.24 LUMC is situated on the main Bundoora campus. The doctor on the Bendigo campus bulk bills students and a full-time nurse provides health education programs. On campuses without their own medical facilities, students are referred to local medical practitioners.

Student Accommodation

- 6.25 There are three residential colleges based on the Bundoora campus and student accommodation at the Bendigo, Mildura and Albury-Wodonga campuses. These accommodation facilities provide a support network to students in residence. Some provide additional support in the form of tutoring, language and academic skills tuition, and a range of social and community focused activities.
- 6.26 La Trobe University Housing Ltd is a commercial venture owned by the University. It provides a variety of accommodation for rent, from student units to family homes for visiting academics and students with families, as well as five-star accommodation facilities. The company has recently secured ISO9001 Quality Endorsement.
- 6.27 Student Aid and Financial Services office (SAFSO) provides services for members of the University, supported by a network of welfare officers on the regional campuses.

<http://www.latrobe.edu.au/housing/>

AD6d: ISO9001
Notification for LTU
Housing Ltd.

Student Organisations

- 6.28 Students on the Bundoora campus have access to recreation facilities through the Sports and Recreation Association (SARA) which offers membership to over 25 different sport and recreational clubs. Arrangements on the other campuses vary.
- 6.29 La Trobe University Union is a major provider of services to the Bundoora, Mildura and Shepparton campus communities. Local student unions or associations operate on the Albury-Wodonga and Bendigo campuses. Advocacy and support with legal issues is available for all students through the Student Representative Council (SRC) and LUPA.

<http://www.latrobe.edu.au/sara/index.html#main>
[menu](#)

<http://www.latrobe.edu.au/union/>

OUTCOMES

Student Profile

Table 6.1 Student Diversity Showing Aggregate Enrolments by Equity and Diversity Groups

By:		2001	2002	2003
Gender:				
	Male	7,927	8,453	10,292
	Female	14,390	15,379	16,283
Indigenous:*		79	91	80
Disability:		779	791	907
NESB:		356	326	432
Rural:		6,390	6,809	7,096
Isolated:		116	114	152
Low Socio-Economic Status:		3,964	4,124	4,293

* In 2003 Indigenous students who did not identify themselves via the enrolment process were identified through the Aboriginal Liaison Office giving a total Indigenous enrolment of 87. The decrease since 2002 was mainly due to a downturn in enrolments at the Bendigo campus, possibly due to difficulties experienced in the rural regions associated with the drought and economic downturn.

Table 6.2 Total Course Completions by Faculty across Equity Groups

Faculty:	2000	2001	2002
Health Sciences			
Faculty Total	1,599	1,686	1,656
Male	284	284	328
Female	1315	1,402	1,328
Indigenous	2	2	0
Disability	37	44	42
Humanities & Soc Sci			
Faculty Total	780	859	745
Male	269	286	254
Female	511	573	491
Indigenous	0	1	5
Disability	29	36	23
Law & Management			
Faculty Total	1,190	1,321	1,323
Male	630	650	657
Female	560	671	666
Indigenous	0	3	0
Disability	16	13	13
Regional Development			
Faculty Total	1,336	1,505	1610
Male	464	565	541
Female	872	940	1,069
Indigenous	9	6	6
Disability	22	46	42
Science, Tech & Eng			
Faculty Total	804	828	855
Male	346	340	368
Female	458	488	487
Indigenous	1	2	1
Disability	22	19	19

Student Grievances

Table 6.3 Contacts made with the Ombudsman's Office

Contacts	2000	2001	2002
Undergraduate Students	62	68	73
Postgraduate Students	38	26	26

The data reflects a stable picture of total numbers emanating from the different groups. The relatively low numbers indicate that grievances and complaints at School or Faculty level are mainly resolved within each area.

*AD6e: Annual Report of
the University
Ombudsman 2002*

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PRIORITIES

6.30 The student support units considered many aspects of their operation during the self review. While many improvements identified were specific to the unit concerned, some common areas of improvement emerged and these are outlined below. More detailed information can be found in the Additional Documentation.

*AD6f: Quality
Improvement Initiatives
Table*

*AD6g: Unit level Self
Review submissions*

[http://www.latrobe.edu.
au/quality/auqa/](http://www.latrobe.edu.au/quality/auqa/)

Planned Improvement	Responsibility	Timeline
Establish a merit-based scholarship program for undergraduate students	Senior Management	2004 and On-going
The following units plan to establish or expand mechanisms for obtaining feedback from their stakeholders: Academic Services Division Counselling Service CCS NBIC	Relevant Managers	2004 and On-going
The following units plan to revise policies and procedures and/or to document policies and procedures: CCS Children's Centre – Bundoora Chisholm College SARA	Relevant Managers	2004 and On-going

Planned Improvement	Responsibility	Timeline
The following units plan to revise, expand or develop plans: Academic Services (Strategic Plan) Children's Centre, Bundoora (Crisis Management Plan) Menzies College (Crisis Management Plan) SARA (Development plans for associations and clubs)	Relevant Managers	2004 and On-going

STRENGTHS

- 6.31 As noted by the trial audit panel, the strongly student-centred nature of LTU is a major strength.
- 6.32 La Trobe University takes a holistic approach to the education of its students. This means that the Student Support Services within the organisation are integral to academic endeavours.
- 6.33 The faculty and campus LASU and ESL units provide excellent support to students.
- 6.34 Student Support has a voice at the highest level of the organisation through the SSAG. The Chair of the SSAG is on the Council's EAPWC.
- 6.35 LTU has been a leader in establishing the Office of the Ombudsman to assist in grievance resolution for both staff and students.
- 6.36 Individual student support areas have identified their particular strengths through the self-review process. These have been detailed in their self-review submissions.

For example, the Children's Centre, which is externally accredited by the National Childcare Accreditation Council Inc., awarded the Centre the maximum High Quality rating in 52 out of 52 categories. The Centre has been awarded the maximum period between reviews of three years. A reaccreditation process was undertaken in June 2003.

- 6.37 Menzies College has developed innovative programs to support and enrich the experience of international students at La Trobe. The College has also pioneered Student-Centred Study Support Programs. Launched in 2003, these have been highly successful in improving retention rates and academic results amongst College residents.

