



WELFARE ASSISTANCE REGULATIONS OF THE MONASH GRADUATE ASSOCIATION INC.

ABN 86 800 958 958

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WELFARE ASSISTANCE REGULATIONS OF THE MONASH GRADUATE ASSOCIATION INC.

1. Short Title

These regulations may be cited as the Welfare Assistance Regulations of the Monash Graduate Association (“MGA”).

1. Authorising Provision

These Regulations are made pursuant to the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012* (Vic) and subject to the MGA Constitution. MGAEC may only amend these regulations in accordance with the provisions of the MGA Constitution.

2. Objective

The MGA is invested in supporting and promoting the wellbeing of all Monash graduate students. The MGA is entrusted with a portion of the SSAF amenities fee paid by most Graduate Students and is authorised to apply same to areas of greatest need and benefit to its Constituents. Financial Hardship is a situation faced by some Graduate Students for varying reasons. The objective of these regulations is to establish the rules under which the MGA may provide direct Welfare Assistance to Constituents in need.

3. MGA Commitment

The MGA is a not-for-profit, representative association for Monash University (Australian campuses) enrolled graduate students. The MGA is an incorporated entity under the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012* (Vic) and is subject to the Constitution of the MGA. The MGA is committed to supporting and protecting the welfare of every Constituent.

4. Meanings

Constituent has the same meaning as in the MGA Constitution.

Emergency Event means a serious, unexpected, dangerous situation or Unforeseeable Event requiring immediate action.

Executive Officer means the Executive Officer of the MGA or delegate.

Goods means any perishable or non-perishable item be it food, items of clothing or homewares.

Graduate Student means a graduate student currently enrolled at any Australian campus and has the same meaning as in the MGA Constitution.

Hardship means financial hardship or poverty or a reason for a Graduate Student being

unable to afford the basic necessities and costs of living, and is consequently at risk of:

- a) homelessness;
- b) starvation;
- c) or other dire conditions.

HR & Finance Officer means the HR and Finance Officer or delegate.

Major Supermarket means Coles or Woolworths.

MGA Advocate means an advocate staff member employed by the MGA.

MGA means the Monash Graduate Association Inc.

MGA Engagement Officer means the MGA staff member or delegate responsible for organising Welfare Assistance packages to be dispensed to Graduate Students facing Financial Hardship.

MGA Senior Advocate means the MGA Senior Advocate or delegate.

MGAEC means the Monash Graduate Association Executive Committee.

SSAF means the Student Services and Amenities Fee, imposed by Monash University pursuant to the Higher Education Legislation Amendment (Student Services and Amenities) Act 2011.

Unforeseeable Event means an Emergency Event which was not able to be anticipated or predicted.

Welfare Assistance includes but is not limited to travel cards, food vouchers, groceries, goods, and cash grants.

5. Eligibility for MGA Welfare Assistance

For a Graduate Student to be eligible for Welfare Assistance from the MGA, the Graduate Student must:

- a) be a currently enrolled Graduate Student of Monash University; and
- b) be experiencing Hardship; and
- c) have already applied for financial support from Monash University through the Monash Connect Emergency Grants Scheme or loan scheme, and received a decision, positive or negative; and
- d) disclose the reasons for requesting Welfare Assistance to an MGA Advocate, and provide evidence where requested; and
- e) specify the purpose of Welfare Assistance; and
- f) have completed and submitted to an MGA Advocate, both the MGA Welfare Assistance Application Form; and if required, the MGA Consent to Disclose Personal Information Form. (**Schedule 1**)

6. Maximum Amounts of Welfare Assistance

- 6.1 The *maximum* amount and type of Welfare Assistance provided to a Graduate Student is determined in accordance with the categories of assistance on the MGA website which are subject to change from time to time.
- 6.2 Graduate Students are not automatically entitled to the maximum amount of any Welfare Assistance category for which they are deemed eligible.

- 6.3 The amount and type of Welfare Assistance provided in section 7.1 may be increased in exceptional circumstances, as determined by the MGA Senior Advocate who shall have absolute discretion in regard to the available budget, on a case-by-case basis, to determine the amount of support, if any is provided to a Graduate Student by the MGA.

7. Welfare Assistance Procedures

- 7.1 Any Graduate Student who presents or has been referred to the MGA for Welfare Assistance will be required to meet with an MGA Advocate. Meetings may take place in person, by zoom or by email subsequent to an application for Welfare Assistance being lodged by the Graduate Student.
- 7.2 The MGA Advocate will make an initial assessment of the Graduate Student's eligibility against the eligibility criteria in section 6 of these regulations.
- 7.3 A Graduate Student who lodges an application for Welfare Assistance but does not meet all eligibility criteria, will have their application rejected and be so notified by the MGA Advocate.
- 7.4 A requirement may be imposed under section 10.5 of these regulations, whereby the Graduate Student will be referred to, and must attend, Monash Connect and apply for an emergency grant under the Monash University the Emergency Grant Scheme and/or a loan under the Student Loan scheme, before their MGA application will be considered.
- 7.5 If a student is required to attend Monash Connect and apply for a Monash University emergency grant or a student loan or both, they must thereafter attend a meeting with the MGA Advocate who will then determine whether or not the Graduate Student qualifies for MGA Welfare Assistance under these regulations.
- 7.6 To assist the MGA Advocate in assessing the Graduate Student's circumstances the Graduate Student must complete the MGA Application Form and if required, the MGA Consent to Disclose Personal Information Form.
- 7.7 Upon confirming that the forms are correctly completed, and the Graduate Student meets all eligibility criteria, the MGA Advocate must obtain approval from the MGA Senior Advocate, who will determine if Welfare Assistance will be granted and the amount.
- 7.8 Upon receiving the decision from the Senior Advocate, the MGA Advocate must communicate the decision to the student.
- 7.9 The MGA may email digital vouchers to Graduate Students currently residing in Victoria.
- 7.10 Where the approved Welfare Assistance requires the purchase of specific goods, the MGA Advocate must forward the approval to the MGA Engagement Officer for implementation.
- 7.11 Once Welfare Assistance is approved, in the case of the assistance being

goods, the onus is on the Graduate Student to advise the MGA Advocate how the goods are to be collected. In the event the assistance includes perishable goods, the items must be picked up as a matter of urgency and will not be retained by the MGA for longer than one week from the time the email notification for collection has been sent to the Graduate Student.

7.12 Goods must be collected and will not be delivered by the MGA.

7.13 At the point of collection of any goods, the Graduate Student must present their Monash University student identification card. In the event another person is to collect the goods on the Graduate Student's behalf, the Graduate Student must notify in advance the MGA Advocate and the MGA Engagement Officer, of the name of the person collecting the goods on their behalf.

8. MGA Senior Advocate Role

- 8.1 Upon receiving a Graduate Student's application for Welfare Assistance, that meets all eligibility criteria as determined by the MGA Advocate, the MGA Senior Advocate will review and consider all supporting documents.
- 8.2 The MGA Senior Advocate will, after reviewing and considering all provided material, decide to either approve or reject the application.
- 8.3 If the application is approved, the MGA Senior Advocate will determine the level of Welfare Assistance, in consultation with the MGA Advocate, who will then notify the HR & Finance Officer of the grant amount for accounting purposes.
- 8.4 The MGA Senior Advocate may confer with the Executive Officer before reaching a decision. The decision of the MGA Senior Advocate is final.

9. Powers of the MGA Senior Advocate

The MGA Senior Advocate has the power to:

- 9.1 Assess any Welfare Assistance application and request further information from the Graduate Student applying for Welfare Assistance;
- 9.2 Approve or reject applications for Welfare Assistance;
- 9.3 Determine amount and type of Welfare Assistance subject to the budget as approved by the MGAEC;
- 9.4 Refuse an application, or revoke approval, or exclude a Graduate Student from eligibility on the grounds of:
 - 9.4.1 Reasonable suspicion of fraudulent conduct;
 - 9.4.2 Ineligibility;
 - 9.4.3 Misuse of previous MGA Welfare Assistance;
 - 9.4.4 Error;
 - 9.4.5 Insufficient MGA funds.

- 9.5 In some circumstances, impose a requirement prior to approving any Welfare Assistance.

10. HR & Finance Officer Role

- 10.1 Once notified of approved Welfare Assistance, the HR & Finance Officer will implement the decision of the MGA Senior Advocate.
- 10.2 Where the approved Welfare Assistance requires a bank transfer of a fixed amount, the HR & Finance Officer will arrange for the amount to be transferred as soon as practicable having regards to the urgency and special circumstances of each case.

11. MGA Engagement Officer Role

- 11.1 Once notified of approved Welfare Assistance, the MGA Engagement Officer will implement the decision of the MGA Senior Advocate as soon as practicable keeping in mind the urgency of each particular case.
- 11.2 The MGA Engagement Officer will then liaise with the MGA Advocate about the delivery mode and logistics of the Welfare Assistance being provided to the student concerned.
- 11.3 If appropriate the MGA Engagement Officer will also notify the HR & Finance Officer.
- 11.4 In the case of issuing goods, the MGA Engagement Officer must verify the Graduate Student's name and ID number, and make a note of the collection date and time the goods were collected by the student or their nominee and pass on the note to the relevant MGA Advocate to place on the student's file.

12. Purchasing of Goods

Any staff entrusted with providing Welfare Assistance to a Graduate Student including purchasing goods will endeavour to:

- 12.1. Purchase appropriate goods which may be perishable or non-perishable depending on the Graduate Student's needs;
- 12.2. Not include purchases of tobacco or alcohol;
- 12.3. Ensure the goods purchased are fit for purpose, of good quality and from an approved retailer;
- 12.4. Ensure all goods purchased are accompanied by a receipt;
- 12.5. Ensure all goods purchased are securely and appropriately stored and able to be carried by the Graduate Student.

13. Unclaimed Goods

- 13.1. All reasonable steps must be taken to advise/notify and remind Graduate Students to collect their Welfare Assistance.
- 14.1 Unclaimed goods may be either returned or made available to another Graduate

Student in need of Welfare Assistance and if non-perishable, stored at the MGA office.

14. Examples of MGA Welfare Assistance

Welfare Assistance from the MGA, as described in the Welfare Assistance categories and subject to the maximum monetary limits specified on the MGA website, may include one or more of the following: Grocery items, toiletries, manchester, stationery, clothing, food vouchers, gift cards, bedding, personal hygiene products, money transfers, payment of medical-related costs and/or visa-related costs and other items and services as approved by the MGA Senior Advocate on a case-by-case basis.

15. Unauthorised Uses of MGA Welfare Assistance

- 15.1 Unauthorised uses of MGA Welfare Assistance, include but are not limited to any acts or activities in violation of University Policy and Statutes or State or Federal Laws.
- 15.2 Welfare Assistance must not be used for gambling, betting, or gifting to others.
- 15.3 Welfare Assistance will not be provided for Thesis Editing, Proofreading or payment of tuition fees.

16. Approved Retailers

Retailers approved for the purposes of Welfare Assistance include: Woolworths; Coles; Aldi; Target; and K-Mart.

17. Record Keeping

Full records must be kept for a period of no less than 7 years of all Graduate Students who access MGA Welfare Assistance.

Schedule 1



ABN: 86 800 958 958

Consent to Disclose Information Form

I,

(full name)

of

born _____

(date of birth),

hereby authorise and direct you to supply to my advocate from the Monash Graduate Association Inc (MGA), any information, records, letters, images, electronic record copies and prints which you hold concerning my financial status and history.

This authority remains valid until revoked by me in writing.

_____ (Signature)

_____ (Date)