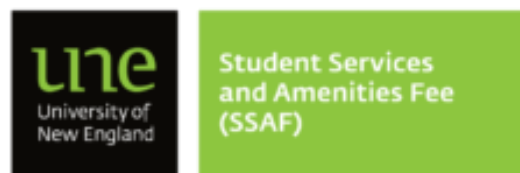


Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF)

Annual Report 2023



1. Introduction

The Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF) supports the provision of a range of non-academic services and facilities for students of the University of New England. This report outlines the SSAF revenue and the allocation of funds for 2023.

In 2023, SSAF revenue provided a range of services and activities for online and on-campus students, which were determined in consultation with democratically elected student representatives through the SSAF Committee (SSAFC). Implementation of the fee was conducted in accordance with the Australian Government’s Student Services, Amenities, Representation and Advocacy Guidelines.

As in previous years, the University consulted widely with students and service areas, to identify priorities for the use of SSAF revenue across 2023, primarily through the SSAFC and the UNE Student Council (previously known as the Student Consultative Committee).

2. SSAF at University of New England

The SSAFC coordinated and managed the allocation of approximately \$3.476m of funding through a range of projects and initiatives, including recurring proposals that have had strong support from students in previous years.

The committee have overseen a structured and meaningful student consultation and engagement process throughout 2023. During the year, the SSAFC looked to further improve the formal consultation process with students and their representatives, aligning SSAF fund allocations with the priorities identified in the SSAF Student Survey.

Services and amenities may be delivered by the University itself, or by third parties on its behalf. An overview of allowable SSAF expenditure is available at the end of this report.

3. Fee Management and Priorities

At UNE, student consultation and fund allocation recommendations are currently overseen by the UNE Student Council (UNESC). The democratically elected group of students play a pivotal role in managing the student and student representative bodies consultation process.

The UNESC consists of combined membership of student representatives and University staff that provide expertise in specific areas, including facilities management, student administration, operations and residential systems.

The SSAFC is chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (previously held by the Chief Financial Officer until 9 August 2023). This Committee is critical for the management of the SSAF at UNE as it provides a voice for the student population through their elected representatives who are able to promote student concerns and allows senior UNE and UNE Life staff to provide input and suggestions regarding project funding.

From 2019, all UNE students pay the SSAF on a per-unit basis, ensuring a fair distribution of the fee and allowing SSAF to be applied to projects that benefit both on-campus and online students.

4. Honorarium payment for President of the UNESC

In January 2023, an honorarium payment to the President of the UNESC was approved by the SSAFC on the basis that the role is part-time. The honorarium of \$350.00 per week (\$18,200 p.a.) is tax-free, and is paid fortnightly to the President in recognition of their tireless work that they undertake on behalf of the students.

5. Changes to SSAF Terms of Reference

In August 2023, the SSAF Terms of Reference (ToR) were changed to reflect the handover of the SSAF Committee Chair from the Chief Financial Officer to the Deputy Vice Chancellor (DVC).

6. Student Consultation and Engagement

A wide variety of UNE student and staff representatives made up the SSAFC which approved the projects allocated in 2023. Student representatives on the SSAFC during 2023, included:

- Ms Evie Levens (UNE Student Council Representative)
- Torryn Ebejer (UNE Student Council Representative)
- Amanda Letcher (UNE Student Council Representative)
- Tashi Dema (Student Academic Reference Group Representative)
- Jes Couclua (UNE Student Council Representative)
- Jerusha Hackworth (UNE Student Council Representative)

7. Annual SSAF Student Survey

In June 2023, UNE Students were invited by the UNESCO to respond to a survey about the use of SSAF funding. The survey was designed to seek student opinion in how UNE manages and administers SSAF funding, and to identify student priorities for future SSAF funding.

The 2023 SSAF student survey received 1,301 responses, or approximately 6% of the UNE student cohort. The survey revealed that there continued to be a substantial number of students who were unaware of SSAF funded activities, and that SSAF funding is not benefitting online students.

The 2023 SSAF survey revealed that students believed the most important SSAF-funded categories are:

1. Health & Welfare (14%)
2. Employment & Careers (13%)
3. Study Skills (11%)
4. Financial Affairs (8%)
5. Accommodation help (7%)

The responses also revealed the following SSAF funded activities which students currently access or use:

1. Studiosity (16%)
2. Online Orientation (16%)
3. Academic Skills Office (13%)
4. Discounts at On-Campus Cafes & Restaurants (9%)
5. SportUNE (8%)
6. UNE Night Shuttle (6%)

During the development of the 2024 SSAF budget, funding proposals were required to be aligned with student preferences as highlighted by the 2023 SSAF Student Survey.

8. UNE Life Service Level Agreement

Between 2021-2023, UNE and UNE Life entered into a Service Level Agreement requiring the University to provide approximately \$1.5m of SSAF funding annually to UNE Life. With over 40% of the projected SSAF funding, UNE Life is a significant partner in the allocation of SSAF funding. Consequently, the SSAFC continues to include a member of UNE Life as an ongoing observer to SSAF Committee meetings, which ensures that students' priorities are heard and government legislation is met.

The following categories approved for the delivery of amenities and services by UNE Life in 2023 include:

1. Food & Beverage
2. Sport & Recreation
3. Health & Welfare
4. Advocating Interests
5. Student Media
6. Orientation
7. Clubs
8. Employment & Careers

9. SSAF Expense Allocation Report

In March 2022, Section 19(5) of the Higher Education Support (Student Services, Amenities, Representation and Advocacy Guidelines 2022) was updated and requires all Higher Education Providers charging a SSAF to provide a publicly available report on SSAF allocation and actual expenditure as part of their annual reporting. This report allows for greater transparency and consistency in reporting on SSAF allocation and expenditure across the sector. The 2022 SSAF Expense Allocation Report is now publicly available on the UNE website.

10. SSAF Highlights in 2023

- The 2023 SSAF Budget of \$3,475,700 was approved by UNE Council.
- Funding was allocated to key on-campus facilities such as SportUNE and UNE Life Café in order to continue to promote excellent student experience on campus.
- Student mental health, including counselling and advocacy continue to be a priority for SSAF spending as highlighted in the SSAF student survey. An additional amount of \$458,000 was approved by SSAFC to be allocated to existing counselling and wellbeing positions in 2023.
- Advocacy and welfare support provided students with independent advice across a wide range of situations. This includes BENESTAR, a national support network of online counsellors, which continues to provide online counselling.
- Orientation activities were organised by both UNE Life and UNE Student Experience for both online and on-campus students.
- UNE Life continued to provide discounts for on-campus food and drink and provided support for the Night Shuttle service.
- Access to Academic study skills support was popular with students, including the use of the online study tool, Studiosity.
- Internships, such as those with TuneFM, provided students with opportunities with career employment and development.

11. 2023 SSAF Financial Allocation and Spending

Student activities, welfare services and funded activities:

Supported Projects	Allocation	Actual Spending
Tune FM	\$210,000	\$210,000
Student Welfare & Counselling	\$530,000	\$880,161
Stro Precinct Subsidy	\$50,000	\$50,000
Student Welfare	\$50,000	\$50,000
Food & Beverage	\$70,000	\$70,000
Queer Allyship Program	\$18,200	\$Nil
UNE Life Pantry	\$30,000	\$30,000
Employment and careers	\$372,150	\$326,591
Total	\$1,330,350	\$1,616,752

Student Sporting and Recreational funded activities:

Supported Projects	Allocation	Actual Spending
SportUNE Student Membership & Facility Membership	\$337,000	\$337,000
Clubs & Societies	\$198,000	\$198,000
Total	\$535,000	\$535,000

Student Representation, Governance and Mandated Support activities:

Supported Projects	Allocation	Actual Spending
Orientation Programs	\$350,000	\$296,867
Independent Student Advocates	\$360,000	\$360,000
UNE Student Council	\$125,000	\$104,912
Study Skills, including Studiosity	\$733,000	\$761,940
SSAF Administration Resource	\$42,350	\$43,887
Total	\$1,610,350	\$1,567,606

Total SSAF Supported Projects	\$3,475,700	\$3,719,358
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During 2022, an underspend of \$921,904 was carried forward to 2023. The SSAFC approved an additional \$458,000 to be allocated in 2023 for shortfalls in existing positions in health and wellbeing categories. The SSAFC also approved the redistribution of UNE Life SSAF project allocations for 2023 due to unexpected overhead costs during 2023.

12. Allowable Expenditure

The Australian Commonwealth Higher Education Support Act 2003 and the Administration Guidelines determine how universities spend SSAF monies. [Student Services and Amenities Fee \(SSAF\) and SA-HELP - Department of Education, Australian Government](#) SSAF revenue may be spent on student services and amenities of non-academic nature that fall within the following 19 key areas:

- Providing food or drink to students on a campus of the higher education provider;
- Supporting a sporting or other recreational activity by students;
- Supporting the administration of a club most of whose members are students;
- Caring for children of students;
- Providing legal services to students;
- Promoting the health or welfare of students;
- Helping students secure accommodation;
- Helping students obtain employment or advice on careers;
- Helping students with their financial affairs;
- Helping students obtain insurance against personal accidents;
- Supporting debating by students;
- Providing libraries and reading rooms (other than those provided for academic purposes) for students;
- Supporting an artistic activity by students;
- Supporting the production and dissemination to students of media whose content is provided by students;
- Helping students develop skills for study, by means other than undertaking courses of study in which they are enrolled;
- Advising on matters arising under the higher education provider's rules (however described);
- Advocating students' interests in matters arising under the higher education provider's rules (however described);
- Giving students information to help them in their orientation; and
- Helping meet the specific needs of overseas students relating to their welfare, accommodation and employment.

13.Clubs and Societies Supported by SSAF in 2023

Academic

- ASPIRE
- Farming Futures
- Geoscience Society
- GPSN – General Practise Students Network
- NERCHA – New England Rural Club for Health Alliance
- PhUNE – University of New England Pharmacy Students’ Association
- RSUS – Rural Science Undergraduate Society
- UNE Archaeology Society
- UNE PaedSoc – UNE Paediatric Society
- UNE Writers Society
- UNE Zoology Society
- UNELSS – UNE Law Students Society
- UNEMSA – UNE Medical Students Association
- UNEPAC – UNE Performing Arts Club
- UNESSES – UNE Surgical and Emergency Society
- UNE Bushland Regeneration Society

Sporting

- Armidale City UNE Cricket Club
- Armidale UNE Outlaws Baseball
- Duval College Kayaking Club
- Duval Netball Club
- New England Nomads
- Robb College Netball Club
- Robb College Rugby Club
- Robb College Women in Sport
- Robb Hockey Club
- St Alberts Hockey Club
- St Alberts Netball Club
- St Alberts Rugby Union Football Club
- UNE Badminton Club
- UNE Basketball
- UNE Cheer & Dance
- UNE Futsal Club
- UNE Outdoor Adventure Club
- UNE Scuba and Snorkelling
- UNE Touch Football Club
- UNE Ultimate Frisbee
- UNE Volleyball

- UNE Water Polo Club

Social/Cultural

- BCSNE – Bangladesh Cultural Society of New England
- BSA – Bangladeshi Student Association
- BSA – Bhutanese Students Association
- Christians United
- IMSA – International Muslim Students Association
- Indonesian Community UNE
- Saudi Club of UNE
- UNE Catholic Student Society
- UNE Games Society

College

- Austin Page Junior Common Room (JCR)
- Austin Page Musical Society
- Duval JCR
- Mary White JCR
- Mary Bagnall PT (All Colleges)
- Robb College JCR
- Sir Frank Kitto Competition (All Colleges)
- St Alberts Academic Team
- St Alberts JCR
- Wright College/Village JCR

Contact Details:

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Note:

Care has been taken to ensure the accuracy and integrity of data contained in this report. Further information regarding the implementation and management of the fee is available on the UNE website.

<https://www.une.edu.au/current-students/my-course/fees/student-services-and-amenities-fee>