

Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF)

Annual Report 2021



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 provides an overview of the implementation of the fee and the use of funds throughout 2021.

In 2021, SSAF revenue provided a range of services and activities for on-campus students, 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.

The University consulted widely with internal students, online students, service areas, individual students and on-campus providers of services to students to identify priorities for the use of SSAF revenue across 2021, primarily through the SSAFC and the Student Consultative Committee (SCC).

2. SSAF at University of New England

The SSAFC coordinated and managed the allocation of approximately \$3.576m of funding through a range of unique projects and initiatives, as well as recurring proposals that have had strong support from students in previous years.

The committees have overseen a structured and meaningful student consultation and engagement process throughout 2021. Engagement beyond the parameters of SSAFC has further cemented the productive relationship and enabled additional collaboration this year.

UNE has a formal consultation process with students and their representative bodies to identify priorities for the allocation of funds generated by the student services and amenities fee.

Depending on the nature of the activity, the University may deliver the services and amenities itself or contract a third party to deliver them on its behalf. An overview of allowable 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 SCC. The democratically elected group of students play a pivotal role in managing the student and student representative bodies consultation.

The SCC 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 Executive Principal Student Experience and reports to the Vice-Chancellor. It 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 approximately 80% of UNE's students that study online.

4. Changes to SSAF Terms of Reference

In 2021, the SSAFC proposed an amended to the SSAF Terms of Reference (ToR), to include two student representatives; one from the Student Consultative Committee and one from the Student Academic Reference Group. This was to ensure that student voices are embedded in the SSAF discussions and that quorum could be achieved with the SSAF committee meets. Other amendments proposed to the SSAF ToR during 2021 were with regards to the functioning of the committee and its functioning as an endorsement rather than an approval committee.

5. Student Consultation and Engagement

A wide variety of UNE student and staff representatives made up the SSAFC which approved the projects allocated in 2021. Student representatives on the SSAFC during 2021, included:

- Mr Cordel Murphy (Student Consultative Committee Representative)
- Ms Morgan Robins (Student Consultative Committee Representative)

6. SSAF Officer Position

During 2021, the position of SSAF Officer was moved from Student Experiences to the Education Quality Directorate. Catherine Lamont and Gabi Widders took on the SSAF Officer role as contractors, with Jenny Williams taking on a 12-month fixed term role in December 2021.

7. Annual SSAF Survey

In August 2021, UNE Students received an invitation from the Student Consultative Committee to respond to a survey about the use of the SSAF. The survey was designed to identify student priorities, respond to individual student enquiries and make recommendations to the UNE SSAF Committee to prioritise SSAF expenditure. The 1,733 responses revealed that a substantial number of students had minimal knowledge about the SSAF. A large number of online students felt that the SSAF program did not service them as it does on-campus students.

The 2021 SSAF survey revealed that students believed the most important SSAF-funded categories are:

1. Health & Welfare (15%)
2. Employment & Careers (13%)
3. Study Skills (11%)
4. Financial Affairs (7%)
5. Accommodation (6%)

The responses also revealed which SSAF funded activities students currently access or use. They are as follow:

1. Online Orientation (16%)
2. Studiosity (14%)
3. Academic Skills Office (11%)
4. Discounts at On-Campus Cafes & Restaurants (7%)
5. SportUNE (6%)
6. The Stro (5%)

These responses were used to assist with the development of the 2022 budget for SSAF.

8. UNE Life Service Level Agreement

The Service Level Agreement (SLA) between UNE and UNE Life contractually requires the University to provide approximately \$1.5m of SSAF funds to UNE Life annually for the period 2021-2023. This translates to over 40% of the projected SSAF funds. As UNE Life is such a significant partner in the allocation of SSAF funding, the SSAFC endorsed having a member of UNE Life as an ongoing observer to SSAF Committee meetings. This will facilitate ongoing dialogue with UNE Life that will ensure that government legislation is met and student voices are heard.

The following categories approved for the delivery of amenities and services by UNE Life 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 Highlights in 2021

- The 2021 SSAF Budget of \$3,576,598 was approved by the Vice-Chancellor.
- Funding was allocated to key on-campus facilities such as SportUNE, Tune FM, and the Stro in order to continue to promote excellent student experience on campus.
- Student mental health, including counselling and advocacy continued to be a priority for SSAF spending. This was particularly relevant given the impact of COVID-19 on students studying remotely.
- Orientation activities were organised to prepare new students for the transition into university study. This included both Online and on Campus Orientation programs.
- Students continued to receive a discount at on-campus food and drink establishments, and were provided additional support with the UNE Life Food Pantry and Night Shuttle.
- Uni4Me support continued for independent advice, assistance and advocacy for students across a wide range of situations.
- Funding was provided for students to access Academic study skills support, including Studiosity.
- Funding in areas such as Internships with Tune FM provided opportunities for students with career employment and development.
- Allocation of funds for a SSAF Administration Resource (SSAF Officer).

10. 2021 SSAF Financial Allocation and Spending

On-Campus student activities, welfare services and funded activities:

Supported Projects	Allocation	Actual Spending
Tune FM	\$235,000	\$200,658
Student Welfare & Counselling	\$613,819	\$634,652
Stro Precinct Subsidy	\$30,000	\$26,888
Student Welfare	\$30,000	\$15,433
Queer Allyship Program	\$100,000	\$7,500
UNE Life Pantry	\$100,000	\$46,449
Employment and careers	\$270,045	\$201,619
Total	\$1,378,864	\$1,133,199

Student Sporting and Recreational funded activities:

Supported Projects	Allocation	Actual Spending
SportUNE Student Membership & Facility Membership	\$370,656	\$310,223
Clubs & Societies	\$140,000	\$140,000
Total	\$510,656	\$450,223

Student Representation, Governance and Mandated Support activities:

Supported Projects	Allocation	Actual Spending
Orientation Programs	\$310,000	\$229,097
Independent Student Advocates	\$352,911	\$331,674
New Student Association	\$200,000	\$12,991
Study Skills, including Studiosity	\$781,817	\$714,367
SSAF Administration Resource	\$42,350	\$26,529
Total	\$1,687,078	\$1,314,658

Total SSAF Supported Projects	\$3,576,598	\$2,898,080
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During 2021, an underspend of \$678,518 occurred due to anomalies including Covid-19. This underspend would not be anticipated in 2022 and should cover shortfalls in counselling, payroll and career development during 2021. It would also be sufficient to cover additional EOI projects such as the UNE "Gradability" project.

11. Allowable Expenditure

Universities are only permitted to spend SSAF monies on a specified set of objectives that are set out by the Commonwealth Government. These objectives are as follows:

- 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 relating to their welfare, accommodation and employment.

12. Clubs and Societies Supported by SSAF in 2021

Armidale UNE City Cricket Club	St Alberts College Rugby Club
Armidale UNE Outlaws Baseball Club	St Alberts College Netball
Armidale Students Promoting International Rights and Equality	St Alberts College Academic Society
Austin College Junior Common Room Committee	The Vietnamese Social Club UNE - Armidale
Bangladesh Cultural Society	UNE Archaeology Society
Christians United	UNE Basketball

Criminology Society	UNE Classics Association
Duval College Junior Common Room Committee	UNE Exercise & Sports Science Association
Duval College Netball	UNE Gaming Society
Earl Page College Junior Common Room Committee	UNE Hockey Club
Earl Page College Musical Society	UNE Medical Student Society
Farming Futures	UNE Paediatrics Society
General Practice Students Network	UNE Saudi Club
Indigenous Students Association	UNE Student Nursing Society
International Muslim Students Association	UNE Student Teacher Society
Mary White College Junior Common Room	UNE Law Students' Society
New England Rural Club for Health Alliance	UNE Lego Society
Pharmacy Students' Association UNE	UNE Medical Students' Society
Rural Science Undergraduate Society	UNE Student Science & Technology Association
Robb College Rugby Club	University of New England Surgical Society
Robb College Women in Sport	UNE Wizards of the Coast
	UNE Zoology Society

Contact Details

Queries regarding the contents of this report should be directed to:

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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>