

2022 Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF) Survey Report to University SSAF Committee

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Acknowledgement of Country

The University of New England respects and acknowledges that its people, programs and facilities are built on land, and surrounded by a sense of belonging, both ancient and contemporary, of the world's oldest living culture.

In doing so, UNE values and respects Indigenous knowledge systems as a vital part of the knowledge capital of Australia.



Summary Report

In June 2022, UNE students received an invitation from the Student Consultative Committee (SCC) to respond to a survey about the use of the Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF). The survey was designed to seek student voice in relation to how UNE currently manages and administers SSAF funding and understand what students feel should be considered in future for the allocation of SSAF funding at UNE.

In total, the survey received **1,031** responses from students. The responses came from a broad cross-section of students reflective of the diverse cohorts of UNE. This report summarises the feedback from students, representing the key themes emerging from the survey and providing the SSAF committee with some recommendations for improving the use of SSAF at UNE. The main themes and recommendations from the SCC on behalf of students are:

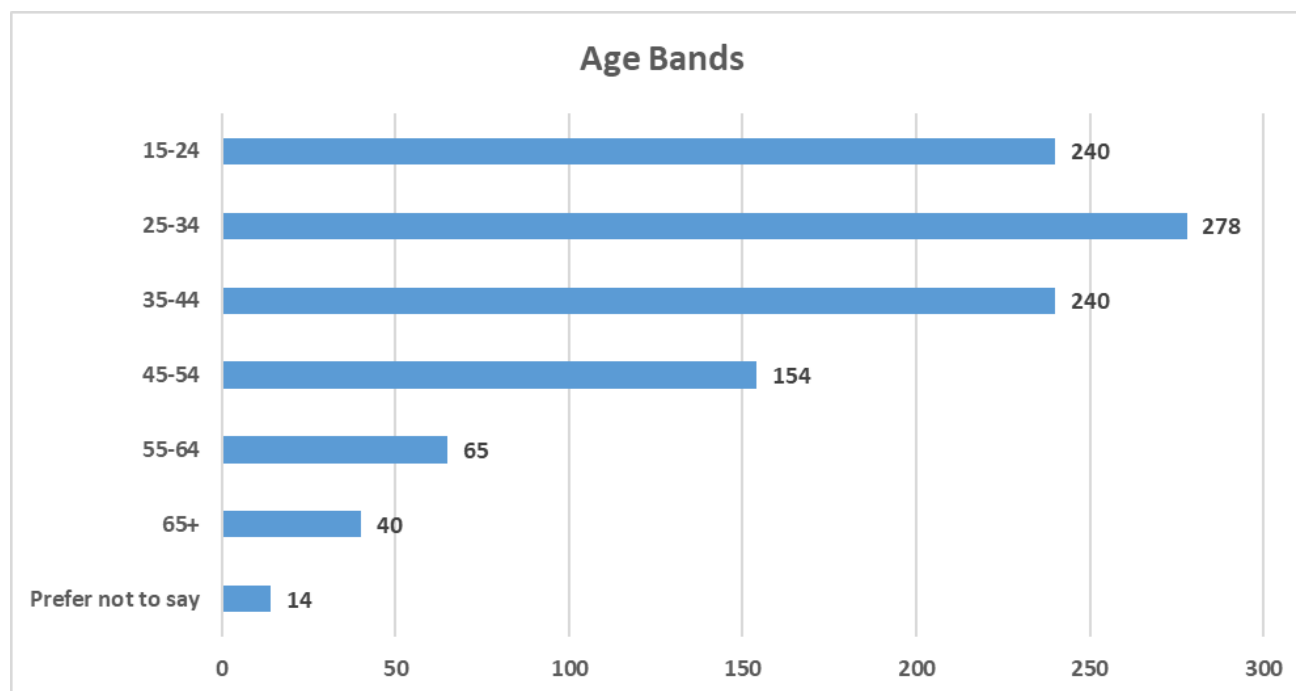
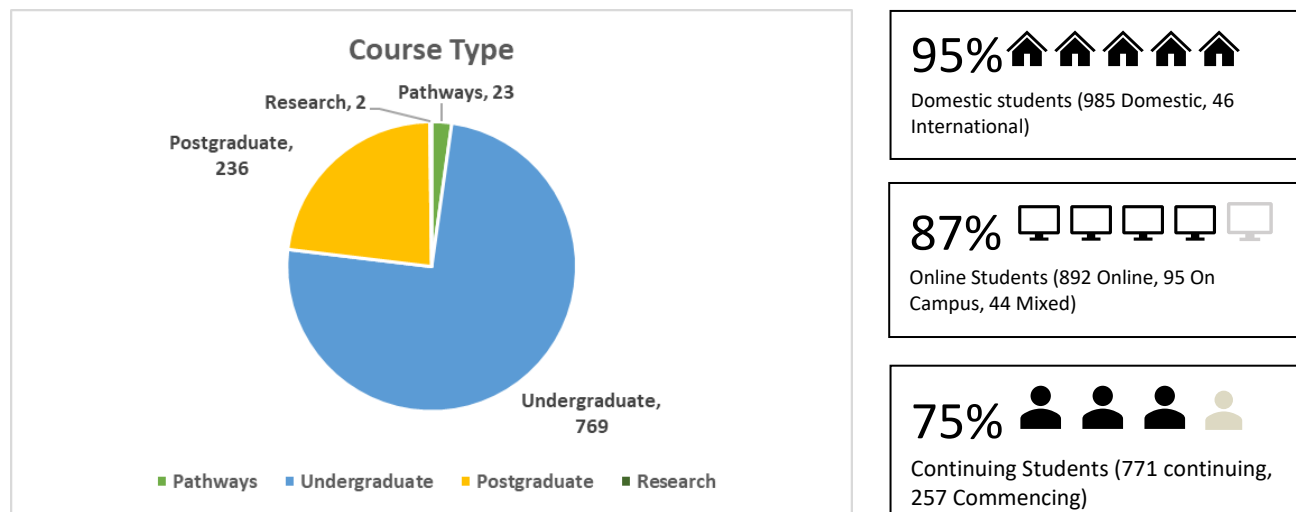
1. **Promotion/Awareness:** It is evident from the responses that many students continue to be unaware of what SSAF is used to fund or how the University is using their SSAF funds to support students. The University needs to be more transparent about the use of the fees and do more to promote the services that are available to students.
2. **Online Students:** There is a common theme amongst responses from UNE's largest cohort of students, our online students, that there is a perceived discrepancy between the use of SSAF funds on on-campus students compared to online. The University needs to ensure that future SSAF expenditure is used to benefit all cohorts of students, with a focus on ensuring that online students can access the same level of benefits as on-campus students.
3. **Focus Areas:** Feedback from students suggests that UNE should be prioritising funding services against 3-4 key areas for SSAF (from the 19 government categories):
 - i. Promoting the health or welfare of students
 - ii. Helping students obtain employment or advice on careers
 - iii. Helping students develop skills for study by means other than undertaking courses of study in which they are enrolled; and
 - iv. Helping students with their financial affairs
4. **Use of Services:** The survey reflects that those students who accessed the services that UNE currently offer under SSAF were reasonably satisfied with the support they received. The uptake of SSAF services overall was reasonably low from students, in alignment with recommendation #1, the University needs to do more to ensure that all students have access to the services and support on offer and are aware of what they can get and how they can access the support they need.

Student Representation

In total, the survey received 1,031 completed responses. This is down from 1,733 responses (1,542 completed responses) in 2021. All statistics represented in this report are based on these 1,031 completed responses only.

Students were asked to provide basic demographic information to help identify the different needs for different cohorts of students. The response by different demographic categories as shown below, highlights that the survey was reflective of the broad range of cohorts of UNE students.

Student Demographic Information

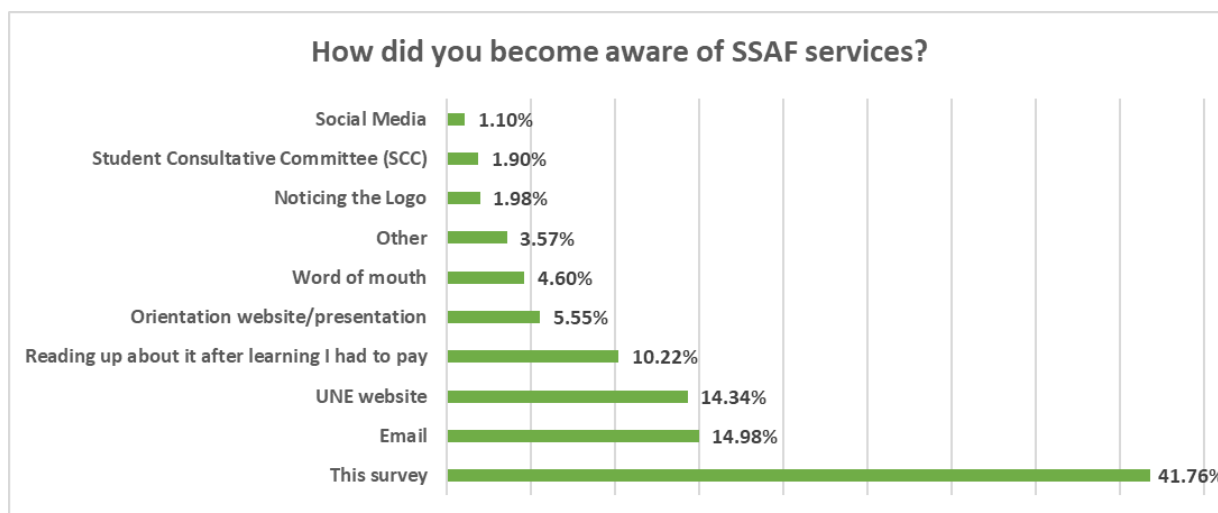


Main Themes

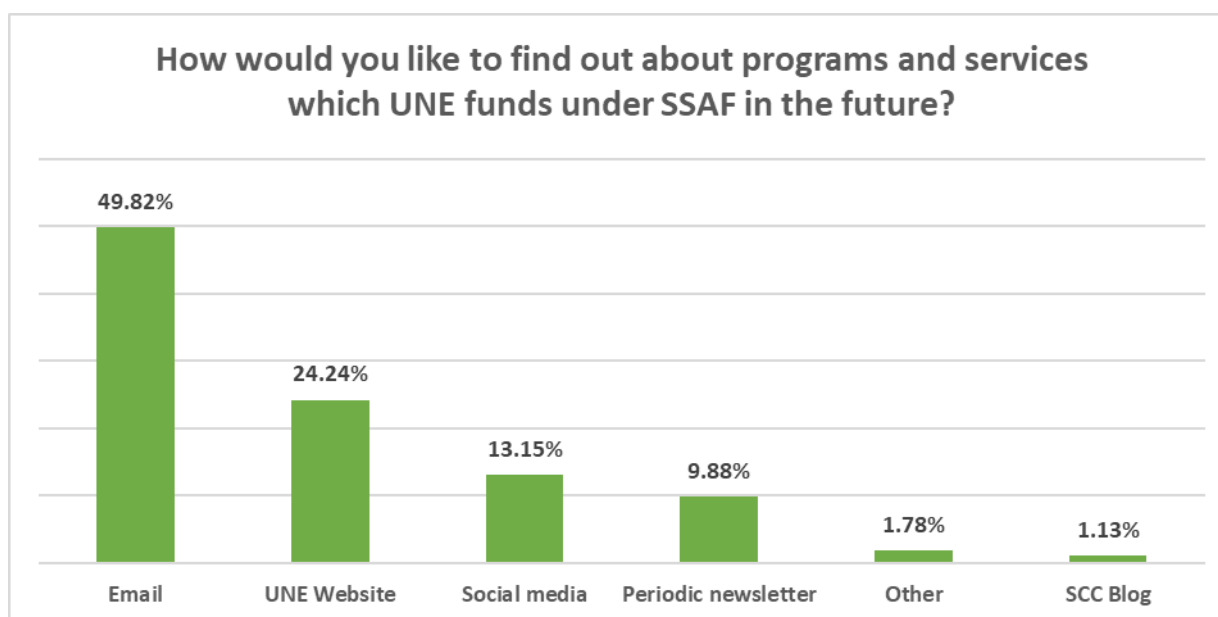
The four main themes are outlined below with supporting data from the survey and recommendations. All comments for each of the themes are direct quotes from student responses.

Theme #1: Promotion and Awareness

Despite a low survey response rate, the completed responses overall indicated that many students continue to be unaware of what their SSAF payments are used for, or the services offered to them under SSAF. From a student point of view, it is very important that UNE continues to be open and transparent about what students' SSAF contributions pay for and how they can access the services offered under SSAF. We note that 41.76% of students found out about SSAF through the survey.



With very few students seeing the SCC as a source of information for SSAF, the SCC needs to increase the profile of SSAF within UNE and better promote the use of SSAF funds to our students. The majority of students (49.82%) indicated that Email was the preferred option for receiving information about SSAF, with the UNE website (24.24%) and social media (13.15%) the other preferred options for messaging students.



Comments (Theme #1)

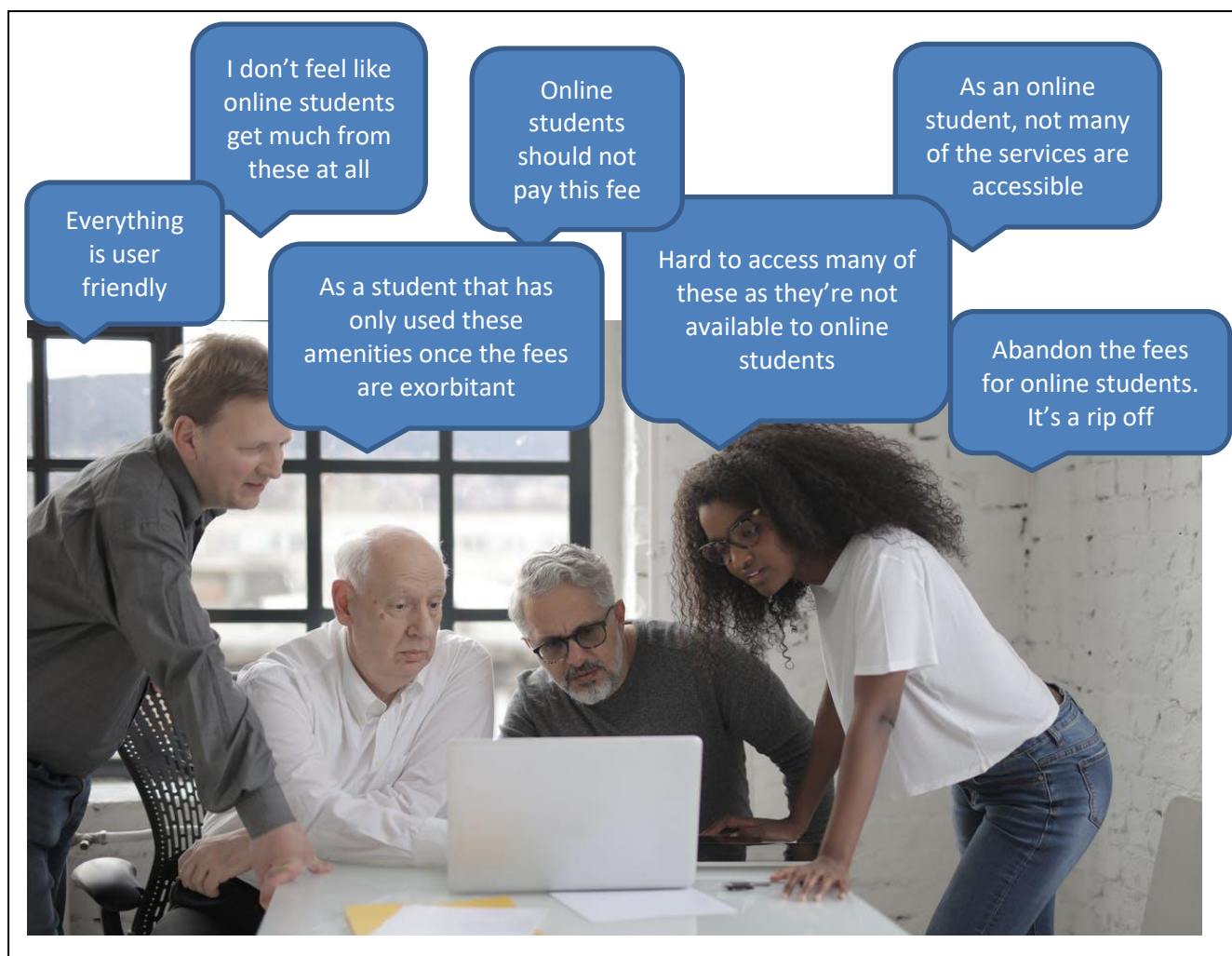


Theme #2: Online Students

The survey asked students to rate on a scale of 1-5 the value for money they feel they get from their SSAF contributions. The ratings are shown in the table below, with a third of students seeing that the SSAF provided some value, whilst nearly 1 in 5 students indicated that it provided zero value. Given that 86% of students that responded to this survey studied online, this highlights that online students still perceive that SSAF provides little or no value to their UNE online experience, or that the majority of SSAF money is spent on services and supports that only benefit on-campus students. The University needs to ensure that SSAF supports and benefits target its largest cohort, and that these are adequately promoted (please see Theme #1).

Ranking	%	No. Students
1 – Zero value	19%	176
2 – Very little value	23%	218
3 – Some value	33%	307
4 – Good value	21%	201
5 – Exceptional value	4%	42

Comments (Theme #2)



Theme #3: Focus Areas

Students were asked to nominate at least 1 and up to 5 areas for their preference for SSAF expenditure based on the 19 Government defined categories. The top response, with nearly 15% of students selecting as one of their top 5 preferences, was 'Promoting the health or welfare of students'. Other categories which ranked highly were 'Helping students obtain employment or advice on careers' (13.33%), 'Helping students develop skills for study by means other than undertaking courses of study in which they are enrolled' (11.86%) and 'Helping students with their financial affairs' (8.51%).

The full table is provided below:

Government Category	%	Number of students
Promoting the health or welfare of students	14.56%	640
Helping students obtain employment or advice on careers	13.33%	586
Helping students develop skills for study, by means other than undertaking courses of study in which they are enrolled	11.86%	521
Helping students with their financial affairs	8.51%	374
Advocating students' interests in matters arising from under the higher education provider's rules (however described)	6.21%	273
Providing legal services to students	6.12%	269
Helping students secure accommodation	6.03%	265
Providing libraries and reading rooms (other than those provided for academic purposes) for students	5.55%	244
Caring for children of students	5.08%	223
Giving students information to help them in their orientation	5.08%	223
Providing food or drink to students on campus of the higher education provider	3.94%	173
Advising on matters arising under the higher education provider's rules (however described)	3.28%	144
Helping meet the specific needs of overseas students relating to their welfare, accommodation and employment	2.87%	126
Supporting a sporting or other recreational activity by students	2.25%	99
Supporting the administration of a club most of whose members are students	1.68%	74
Supporting an artistic activity by students	1.55%	68
Helping students obtain insurance against personal accidents	0.80%	35
Supporting the production and dissemination to students of media whose content is provided by students	0.80%	35
Supporting debating by students	0.50%	22

Theme #4: Use of Services

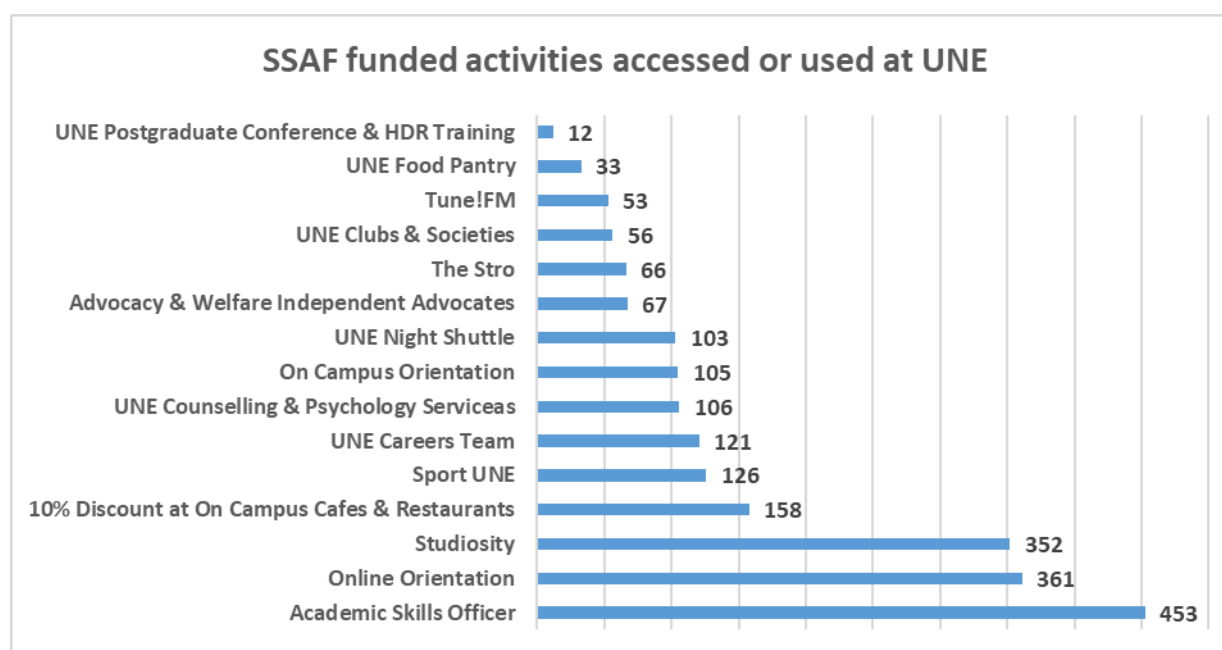
Students were provided with a list of activities UNE offers under the SSAF program and asked to select each of the services they had accessed or used at UNE. For each service they used they were asked to rate their overall satisfaction on a Likert scale of 1 to 5:

- 5 – Very satisfied
- 4 – Somewhat satisfied
- 3 – Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- 2 – Somewhat dissatisfied
- 1 – Very dissatisfied

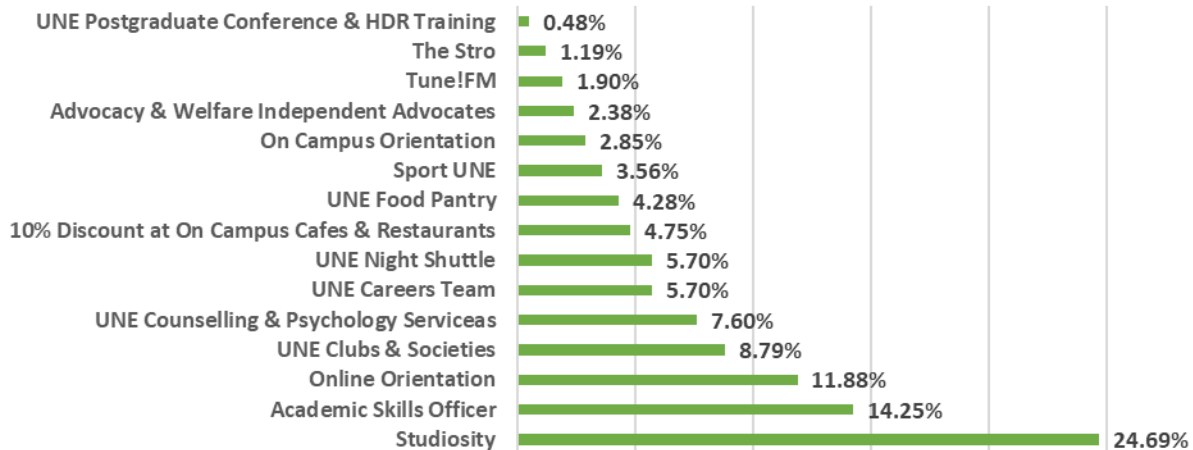
Service Satisfaction	%	Number of students
Very satisfied	42.50%	329
Somewhat satisfied	36.05%	279
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	15.76%	122
Somewhat dissatisfied	3.49%	27
Very dissatisfied	2.20%	17

Those students who accessed the services funded by SSAF have given them a very high rating, with nearly three-quarters of users either very satisfied or somewhat satisfied. This gives further weight to the need to better promote services so more students can benefit from what is on offer.

The three highest priorities which students selected included accessing support by the Academic Skills Officer (20.87%), Online Orientation (16.62%) and Studiosity (16.21%), with nearly one quarter of students aware of the availability of Studiosity. However, due to the low awareness of other SSAF funded categories, the committee may need to increase student awareness and uptake of all other categories.

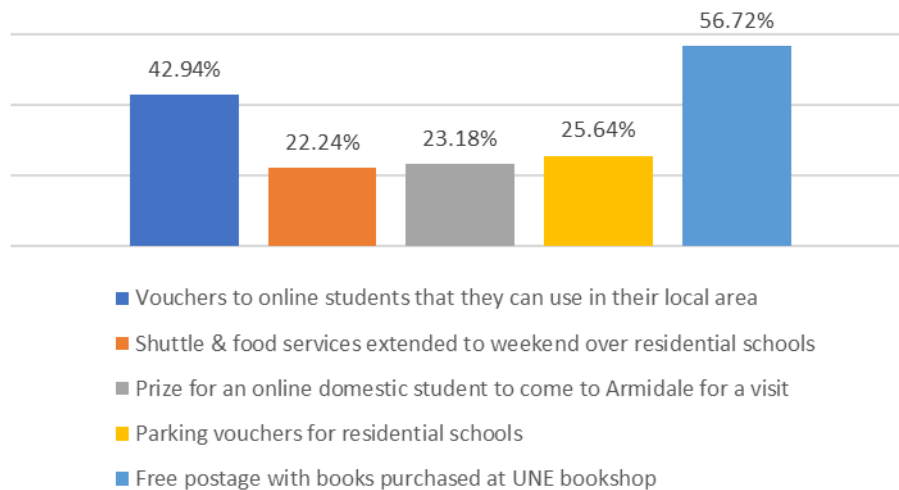


Which activities were you aware are funded by SSAF at UNE



Other options were put forward as potential targets for SSAF expenditure. The number of students who selected each option is below, with the greatest response being free postage from the UNE bookstore (56.72%). However, it is important to note the data on this matter is limited due to the closed number of pre-set options, some of which are out of the scope of SSAF funding. Going forward, the SCC recommends using open-ended questioning to better understand the student perspective, as well as more inclusive, helpful and tangible options to offer students as suggestions.

Extremely Useful



Comments – Suggestions for Improvements



Comments – Positive Service



Conclusion:

Overall, the 2022 survey received a significant decrease in responses compared to previous years. The SCC hypothesises that this could be attributed to several factors, including timing of the survey near exams, survey fatigue and the short timeframe. A concerning possibility is also that many students already participated previously but are yet to see a tangible difference. Unfortunately, much of the 2022 survey results mirror those of 2021, and subsequently many of the SCC recommendations to the SSAF committee remain the same.

Following on from the recommendations made above, the SCC would like to reiterate the importance of promotion of SSAF services to students. Evidently, the last 12 months have made little difference in improving the awareness of SSAF funds to students, as 41.76% of respondents still found out about SSAF services from the survey. The SCC recommends an online portal of information that lists and explains all the services available under SSAF, and how/where to access them. Whether it be via the UNE Website, a Moodle page or another form, the SCC feels this would be a good first step in more clearly highlighting the resources available.

Secondly, the SCC would also like to again highlight the importance of ensuring that SSAF supports helps to benefit UNE's online cohort, and that these are adequately promoted and easily accessible.

Finally, the SCC would like to place emphasis on the importance of closing the loop. We would like the results and outcomes of this survey report to be communicated to students, in the interests of greater awareness and transparency of SSAF funding.

The SCC is very dedicated to ensuring quality, readily accessible and equal support services to all UNE students. We welcome every opportunity to partner with UNE staff and students, and would like to thank both the EQD team and the SSAF Committee for assisting in the creation of this report and allowing a platform for the student voice respectively.