



Transition Plan template - guidance

Requirement to allocate a minimum of 40 per cent of student services and amenities fee (SSAF) revenue to eligible student-led organisations

Section 19-39 of the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* (HESA) and the *Higher Education Support (Student Services, Amenities, Representation and Advocacy) Guidelines 2022* (SSARA Guidelines) require higher education providers that charge a SSAF to allocate a minimum of 40 per cent of their SSAF revenue to student-led organisations from 1 January 2025.

The definition of a student-led organisation is as follows and set out in Section 19-39(3) of the HESA:

- (3) An organisation is a **student led organisation** that relates to a higher education provider for a particular calendar year if:
- (a) the majority of the persons constituting the governing body (however described) of the organisation are either or both of the following:
 - (i) students enrolled in a *course of study with the higher education provider during the calendar year;
 - (ii) students who have been enrolled in a *course of study with the higher education provider during any of the 3 immediately preceding calendar years; and
 - (b) the majority of the persons constituting the governing body (however described) of the organisation have been democratically elected by students enrolled in a *course of study with the higher education provider when the student votes in the election; and
 - (c) the organisation satisfies the requirements (if any) specified in the SSARA Guidelines for the purposes of this paragraph.

As set out in Section 19-39(1) of the HESA, this only applies to student led organisations in receipt of 40 per cent of the SSAF revenue collected by providers; the remaining 60 per cent providers can continue to allocate under the existing requirements of the HESA.

Part 4, paragraph 20 of the SSARA Guidelines requires higher education providers to be satisfied that a student-led organisation in receipt of 40 per cent of the SSAF revenue collected by providers has appropriate governance arrangements, including that:

- (i) the governing body of the organisation makes decisions independently from the higher education provider; and
- (ii) the organisation keeps and publishes annual audited accounts that record the organisation's income and expenditure, including in relation to transactions between the higher education provider and the organisation; and

- (iii) the organisation has, and complies with, policies and procedures in place that relate to record keeping, risk management, fraud prevention, and financial controls.

The student-led organisation must also provide the services set out in subsection 19-38(4) of the HESA to students using the SSAF revenue allocated to them in a calendar year.

Section 19-40 of the HESA provides for the Department of Education (the department) to make a determination in relation to transitional arrangements for up to three consecutive years for a Table A provider, and up to five consecutive years for a non-Table A provider.

To enable the department's decision-making, transition plans must:

- provide evidence of why the provider is not able to meet the new requirement and what the 'gap' is to meeting either or both the funding requirements or the governance requirements;
- demonstrate how the provider will achieve full compliance on both the funding and governance requirements of the measure by the conclusion of the transition timeframe, which is a maximum of three consecutive calendar years for Table A providers, and five consecutive calendar years for non-Table A providers, and earlier if possible; and
- be submitted and reported against annually.

Transition plans are:

- separate to the production of annual, public SSAF allocation reports released by the provider
- for the purposes of seeking agreement to the proposed transition plan and will not be proactively released by the department, though may become public through normal operation of government.

Additional supporting information can be provided to the department as needed, and the department may follow up for further information where issues are identified.

As each provider's arrangements are unique, it is expected that supporting information is likely to be required to enable the department to be satisfied the outcome of the policy would be achieved by the provider's intended approach.

Responsibility for legislative compliance rests with the provider

As the responsible party under the HESA, the provider is required to have appropriate oversight of the arrangements within student-led organisations and SSAF expenditure to ensure compliance with the HESA.

Provided that a student-led organisation meets all the HESA and SSARA Guidelines requirements, providers have the discretion to determine the most appropriate mechanism to prioritise and fund the student-led organisations who are in receipt of 40 per cent of the allocated SSAF revenue as long as they are providing services consistent with Section 19-38 of the HESA. Providers may allocate SSAF revenue to one or more student-led organisation to comply with the HESA and SSARA Guidelines.

Timing

Key annual dates from SSAF collection years from 2026 onwards:

31 May (prior year)	Providers submit transition plan for subsequent calendar year with required information
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July to August (prior year)	Departmental assessment of transition plans, including requests for further information and support for revisions to ensure provider compliance.
September (prior year)	Approval from Department of Education
1 January (SSAF collection year)	Transition arrangements take effect

University of New England

Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF)

2027 Transition Plan

Introduction

1. This Transition Plan is for the University of New England (UNE) to seek approval from the Department of Education (the department) to enter into a transition arrangement for three consecutive years (as a Table A provider), consistent with Section 19-39 of the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* and the Higher Education Support (Student Services, Amenities, Representation and Advocacy) Guidelines 2022.
2. Submission of this plan to the department does not constitute agreement to the plan. Providers will be notified of the status of their plan following assessment and consideration.

Application

3. Provide an overarching summary of the current arrangements for the delivery of student services and the uses of the SSAF funding. For example, this may include information about how student services are delivered now, what future plans for service delivery may be, recent changes to engaging with student led organisations, information on the student population and information about campus arrangements e.g. multi-campus, regional campuses (**no more than 750 words**).

UNE offers a comprehensive range of SSAF-funded student services designed to enhance the academic and personal experience of students across all campuses and modes of study. For Semester 1 2026, the student population of 15, 900 consists of 85% online and 15% on campus.

UNE has four campuses (Armidale, Sydney/Parramatta, Tamworth and Taree), a network of eight Regional Study Centres across the New England and North-West of NSW and participates in the Country University Centres.

The University and its controlled entity (UNE Life) deliver a broad range of SSAF funded services and activities and are committed to ensuring that these services are accessible and relevant to both on-campus and online cohorts, as UNE services a significant number of external students. The delivery of these services is supported through SSAF funding, which (consistent with the SSAF transition plan approved in 2025 for 2026) is allocated predominantly to university-managed services, following consultation with students and involving students in decision-making in accordance with SSAF legislative requirements.

SSAF-funded support services delivered directly to students include counselling and mental health support, advocacy and wellbeing services, orientation programs, student events, recreational

activities, sporting events, food and beverage services, career development initiatives, accessibility services, student media content, student clubs and societies and study skills support. These services are delivered through multiple channels, including on-campus, online and hybrid formats, ensuring that all students, regardless of their mode of study or location, have access to the supports they need. The University recognises the diverse needs of its student population, including those studying on multiple campuses or through blended learning formats. In 2026, 90% of SSAF is currently allocated to continuing staff roles or continuing contracts in the University and in UNE Life that deliver these services.

To strengthen student voice and involvement in decision-making, the University established the UNE Student Council (UNESC) in 2024. Relevant policies and procedures have been developed and are being implemented in order to comply with legislation. The UNESC plays a central role in the decision-making process regarding SSAF funding through the annual SSAF Student Survey, which supports the identification of students' priorities and recommendations of SSAF funding allocation, resulting in more direct involvement of students in shaping the services and activities they value the most. Officers of the UNESC sit on the SSAF Committee that makes the final recommendations on SSAF allocations. This has resulted in more direct involvement of students in shaping the services and activities they value most.

The University aims to further enhance its services and improve accessibility for all students. Plans to increase student involvement in the governance and delivery of student services through the establishment of eligible SLO(s), will ensure that student needs are at the forefront of SSAF decision-making.

The University remains committed to ensuring that all students can access the support, resources, and opportunities that enhance their academic success and overall university experience. By continuously adapting to the evolving needs of the student population, the University is ensuring that student services and amenities remain relevant, accessible, and supportive.

4. Provide an overarching summary explanation and supporting evidence of (1) why your organisation is not yet able to meet the funding and/or governance requirements and which requirement you are seeking transition for e.g. it could be either funding or governance requirements, or both requirements; and (2) the period of transition you are seeking for each requirement, noting the maximum approval period is one year and that transition arrangements have to be agreed yearly – it is not possible to provide multi-year approval (**no more than 300 words**)

UNE is seeking transition arrangements for both funding and governance requirements to ensure full compliance with the SSAF legislative framework. Given that 90% of SSAF expenditure in 2026 is allocated to continuing staff roles and continuing contracts within UNE and UNE Life that deliver essential services, the University requires transition arrangements to progressively increase allocations to eligible student-led organisations whilst maintaining key services. The University is also working towards establishing a secondary SLO. We have made progress with the adoption of an SLO policy; the UNESC has progressively been formalised to meet the requirements of an SLO; the UNESC has been allocated 10% of funding in 2025 and 20% in 2026 which is consistent with the University's Transition Plans; and The University is supporting the UNESC to commence activities to expend SSAF on eligible expenditure.

Funding Requirements: SSAF funds multiple core services provided through the University and UNE Life, including counselling, career development, student advocacy services, and orientation. These services are critical to support the holistic needs of students.

If the University were required to allocate the minimum 40% of SSAF revenue to eligible SLOs in 2027, it would face a funding shortfall that it could not accommodate within its budget without material impacts on service continuity. Noting compliance with the approved 2025 plan in 2025 and 2026, the University continues to anticipate that it will be able to progressively increase the allocation and maintain service levels over the three-year transition period as detailed below. The University will continue planning for continuity of core service provision to students, identify services that can be delivered through SLOs and develop transition funding arrangements.

Governance Requirements: The University is also seeking transition arrangements for governance requirements. The University has developed a framework to recognise an SLO, along with applicable policies and procedures. Despite this progress, the University is still working towards establishing a secondary SLO. The University is supporting the UNESCO to update its constitution and policies and procedures in order to maintain compliance with UNE's policies regarding SLOs (which align with the legislative requirements). This requires the engagement and agreement of the UNESCO, which currently does not have the experience or staff to drive the process at pace. Internal policies and procedures governing the allocation and oversight of SSAF funds also require updates.

Given the complexity of these adjustments, the University is requesting a full three-year transition plan for both the funding and governance requirements, noting that approval is initially for 12 months in each instance. The University seeks to implement the necessary governance changes during 2027, while progressively increasing the financial allocation to compliant SLOs over the three-year transition period and is committed to revisiting and refining these arrangements annually to maintain and achieve full compliance with the SSAF guidelines.

This transition plan will ensure that UNE is able to comply fully from the end of the transition period in December 2027.

5. To agree to a transition plan, the department must be assured that key services would be maintained at an appropriate level for the calendar year in question, and that the plan will enable the provider to fully comply with all legislated requirements by the end of the plan.
 - a. Describe how service delivery of key services will be maintained at an appropriate level throughout the transition plan (**no more than 300 words**).

UNE is committed to ensuring that key services will continue to be provided at an appropriate level throughout the transition period. The University will undertake a thorough review of its budget allocation for 2027 and identify which services may be progressively transitioned to eligible SLO(s), where appropriate, without service disruption. Core services will continue to be delivered through existing continuing staff roles and continuing contracts within UNE and UNE Life.

Core services, such as counselling, career development, student advocacy services, and orientation programs will continue to be fully funded and delivered without disruption. These services are critical to supporting the wellbeing and academic success of our students, and the University has prioritised them in the budget allocation process to ensure their continuity. As noted above, a requirement to allocate 40% of SSAF to SLOs in 2027 could not be achieved within the University budgets without significant impact on core services currently delivered by continuing University staff.

In addition to maintaining existing services, the University is taking proactive steps to address any potential adjustments needed to meet the legislated requirements. This includes reassessing proposed 2027 SSAF funding distribution to university and controlled entity activities to ensure that at least 30% of the total 2027 SSAF revenue is allocated to SLOs in 2027. The University is working

closely with the UNESCO to ensure it is equipped to manage its proposed share of the funding whilst ensuring ongoing service delivery. Service delivery and service demand will be monitored through existing SSAF governance and reporting arrangements to ensure key services remain at an appropriate level.

By proactively managing both funding and governance, the University will ensure that all key services continue to be delivered at an appropriate level, with full compliance achieved by the end of the three-years of transition plans.

6. For each year that the transition plan is intended to cover, describe **how** your organisation will achieve compliance with the funding and governance requirements below, populate the **milestones/timeframes** in achieving this, and how your organisation will be **fully compliant by the end** of the proposed transition period.
 - a. **Funding requirement (no more than 300 words)** regarding the allocation of 40 per cent of SSAF revenue should include information on the:
 - o key activities to be delivered through expenditure of SSAF revenue across the provider, for both student-led organisations and other entities
 - o stakeholder engagement and outcomes in determining SSAF allocation and implementing transition arrangements
 - o the proposed allocations of the 40 per cent of SSAF revenue to student-led organisations on an annual basis
 - o progress against any previous milestones or commitments in previous annual plans submitted to the department, including actual SSAF revenue collected, distributed and expensed for preceding years
 - o provide the total SSAF revenue expected to be collected and the intended allocation amount and percentage to student-led organisation/s for each year that the transition plan is intended to cover. **Note: this information should align with the information provided in the SSAF Allocation Report.**

Response:

Key activities funded and delivered through SSAF, either through UNE, UNE Life and the UNESCO, include health & welfare, employment & careers, study skills, and orientation. The SLO is eligible to deliver these services under its funding agreement; with details for 2027 dependent on the SLO's budget process as well as UNE decisions.

UNE has made significant progress reviewing and updating its policies and procedures to ensure that, as a provider, it can meet its legislative and governance obligations in 2025, 2026 and 2027 under the new SSARA guidelines and will enable it to transition existing services funded by SSAF to an SLO.

The University has engaged with stakeholders, including the UNESCO, to develop and build the required frameworks and identify SSAF-funded activities that may be progressively transitioned to SLO delivery. This requires regular meetings between the University, UNESCO and the SSAF Committee. UNESCO officer representation on the SSAF Committee, and the annual SSAF student survey are designed to identify student priorities and assist in making recommendations to the SSAF Committee to prioritise SSAF funding allocations.

During the transition phase, the University has been given approval by the Department to allocate 10% of SSAF to an SLO in 2025, and 20% in 2026. It is the University's intention to allocate 30% to an

SLO in 2027, ensuring full compliance and a 40% allocation is achieved at the end of the three-year transition period.

SSAF revenue allocations versus actual revenue:

- 2023 SSAF Revenue Allocation \$3,475,700: 2023 Actual SSAF Revenue \$3,461,552; 2023 SSAF allocation expensed \$3,719,358
- 2024 Allocation \$3,409,427: 2024 Actual SSAF Revenue \$3,271,216: 2024 SSAF Allocation expensed \$3,239,000.
- 2025 SSAF funding allocation of 10% to an SLO was approved by the Department on 23 April 2025.
- 2026 SSAF funding allocation of 20% to an SLO was approved by the Department on 22 September 2025.

Funding Milestones	2025	2026	2027
Estimated SSAF revenue	\$3,463,902	\$3,798,191	\$4,091,752
Allocation to student-led organisations	\$346,390	\$759,638	\$1,227,525
Percentage allocation to student-led organisation	10%	20%	30%

b. Governance requirement (no more than 300 words) regarding student-led organisations which should include information on:

- o how the planned governance arrangements and timeframes to design, establish and implement by either the provider or its student-led organisation, will be achieved, and
- o progress against any previous milestones or commitments in previous annual plans submitted to the department.

UNE has supported the UNESC to implement changes to its Constitution, governance framework and financial reporting to ensure that it meets the SLO legislation and SSARA Guidelines. The UNESC's constitution has been ratified and documentation has been developed (onboarding guide and formal procedures) to support their reporting and administrative obligations as an independent student led organisation. A Service Level Agreement (SLA) between UNESC and the University has been executed and an SLA between UNESC and UNE Life (an independent entity provider of student services to the University) has been developed for the 2026. The delivery of services via the SLO to students has been informed via a SSAF survey and independent engagement with the student body.

These changes are continuing to be undertaken during 2026 in order for UNESC to be regarded as a compliant SLO, subject to the agreement and involvement of the UNESC. UNESC already receives SSAF funding from the University, with the University intention to allocate an increased amount of 30% of SSAF funding during the 2027 calendar year to eligible SLO's. This staggered process is to ensure that the UNESC can manage the changes to its governance framework and financial management.

The University has approved a framework which meets the SSAF legislation and SSARA Guidelines to recognise and oversee eligible SLO(s) at UNE. A service level agreement has been established between the University and the SLO for the provision of SSAF funded services and activities. Progress has been made against previous milestones, with further work required to establish a secondary SLO.

Transition Plan Governance Milestones	2025	2026	2027
UNE Student Council			
"Organisation"	<p>The University is supporting the UNESC in revising its constitution and policies and procedures.</p> <p>The University developed an SLO policy and procedure framework recognising SLOs at UNE that meet legislation.</p>	<p>Actioned and implemented in 2026. SLO recognition framework implemented; Service Level Agreement and Funding Agreement executed with UNE Life; UNESC constitution/policy updates progressed to support SLO compliance.</p>	<p>Actioned and implemented in 2027. Framework fully operational; secondary SLO established; governance arrangements embedded to enable UNE to meet the minimum 40% SLO allocation requirement from 1 January 2028.</p>
Majority student-led	<p>Completed - 100% student led – List of representation outlined in the UNESC Constitution. Council members cannot be full-time permanent or fixed-term staff of the provider and must have an active enrolment.</p>	<p>100% student led – The option to establish a second SLO.</p>	<p>100% student led – two or more established SLOs that meet the legislative requirements to allocate minimum 40% of SSAF funding.</p>
Democratically elected leaders	<p>Completed – Election criteria are expressly stated in the UNESC Constitution. Elections are independent from the provider and only eligible students may nominate and vote. Elections are held every two years.</p>	<p>Yes – will be expressly stated in each future SLO's constitution. Election processes continue to operate independently and ensure only eligible students nominate and vote.</p>	<p>Yes – will be expressly stated in each future SLO's constitution.</p>
Governing body of the Organisation makes decisions independently from the higher education provider	<p>In progress and requires minor amendments – UNESC make decisions independent of the provider, but this is not implicitly stated in the constitution. An amendment will be proposed in relation to SSAF expenditure to provide clear guidelines to the provider and UNESC. The University is supporting the UNESC to develop and implement the necessary changes. This requires the agreement of the UNESC independent of the University.</p>	<p>In progress and will be completed in 2026 subject to agreement of UNESC.</p>	<p>Actioned and completed in 2027.</p>

<p>Keeping and publication of annual audited accounts</p>	<p>The UNESCO constitution requires compliance with UNE Policy inclusive of the Records Management and Financial Management.</p> <p>Additional information regarding publication of accounts and appointment of an independent financial auditor and to be confirmed.</p> <p>The University is supporting the UNESCO to develop and implement the necessary changes.</p>	<p>In progress and to be completed in 2026 subject to agreement of UNESCO.</p>	<p>Actioned and implemented in 2027.</p>
<p>Policies and procedures for record keeping, risk management, fraud prevention, and financial controls</p>	<p>The UNESCO constitutions states all members must abide by UNE policy. UNE has policies and procedures relating to <u>Records Management, Fraud and Corruption Control, Risk Management and Financial Management</u>. The constitution outlines record keeping requirements for UNESCO, however, more explicit provisions will be required to ensure all legislative requirements are met.</p> <p>The University is supporting the UNESCO to develop and implement the necessary changes. This requires the agreement of the UNESCO independent of the University.</p>	<p>In progress and to be completed in 2026 subject to agreement of UNESCO.</p>	<p>Actioned and implemented in 2027.</p>

Contact information


Please nominate one relevant individual to be a SSAF Contact Officer for your organisation. The Department of Education may follow up for additional supporting information or may follow up for further information where issues are identified.

Please provide the following details for your nominated SSAF Contact Officer:

<p>Full name</p>	<p>Jenny Williams</p>
<p>Position title</p>	<p>SSAF Advisor</p>
<p>Email address</p>	<p>jwilli75@une.edu.au</p>
<p>Phone number(s)</p>	<p>02 6773 5575</p>

Transition Plan Owner

I, Professor *Chris Moran*, Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive Officer of the University of New England, seek approval of this Transition Plan and declare that the information provided in the Transition Plan is to the best of my knowledge true, complete and correct and meets the requirements of the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* and the *Higher Education Support (Student Services, Amenities, Representation and Advocacy) Guidelines 2022*.

Signature of Owner	
Full name of Owner	Professor Christopher Moran
Position title of Owner	Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive Officer
Date Approved	29-06-2026

Please submit your organisation's completed Transition Plan via email to SSAF@education.gov.au.