



Frequently asked questions (FAQ)

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

Contents

Frequently asked questions (FAQ).....	1
Details of the requirement	3
1. Why has the requirement for providers to allocate a minimum of 40 per cent of SSAF revenue to student-led organisations been introduced?.....	3
2. What is the intent of the requirement?	3
3. Does every provider now need to collect a SSAF?	3
4. What is the new requirement and when does it commence?	3
5. Are providers required to allocate 40 per cent of their budgeted SSAF revenue or 40 per cent of their actual SSAF revenue for the year to student-led organisations?	4
6. When will the new requirements commence?	4
Governance details	4
7. What is a student-led organisation?	4
8. Are alumni able to be part of a student-led organisation’s governing body?	4
9. Is there any flexibility around the structure of student-led organisations receiving the 40 per cent of SSAF revenue?	5
10. Do providers need to have formal agreements in place with student-led organisations? ...	5
11. Can student-led organisations contract a third party to provide a service on their behalf or outsource services to the provider that is currently offering a service?	5
Transition arrangements	5
12. What if my institution is unable to allocate 40 per cent of SSAF revenue to student-led organisations as it will affect the services and amenities currently on offer?.....	5
13. How and when can providers apply for transition arrangements and what documentation will be required/considered?	6

14. How long will the applications take to be approved?.....	6
Reporting and accountability.....	6
15. Where does the responsibility lie for ensuring student-led organisations are able to manage the SSAF funding allocated to them?	6
16. Can a provider withhold SSAF revenue from a student-led organisation if it is concerned that the allocated SSAF revenue is not being spent in line with the HESA?	6
17. Are there any new reporting obligations in relation to the requirement for the use of 40 per cent of SSAF revenue?	7
18. Will providers be responsible for acquitting and reporting on the 40 per cent SSAF revenue allocated to student-led organisations?.....	7

Department means the Australian Government Department of Education.

HESA means the *Higher Education Support Act 2003*.

Provider means higher education provider as defined under section 16-1 of the *Higher Education Support Act 2003*.

SSAF means the student services and amenities fee which is a fee that students pay to their provider to support services and amenities of a non-academic nature.

SSARA Guidelines means the Higher Education Support (Student Services, Amenities, Representation and Advocacy) Guidelines 2022.

Details of the requirement

1. Why has the requirement for providers to allocate a minimum of 40 per cent of SSAF revenue to student-led organisations been introduced?

The [Australian Universities Accord Final Report](#) recognised student organisations' important contribution to the student experience and recommended that the long-term sustainability of student-led organisations should be protected and a set proportion of SSAF funding should be guaranteed to these organisations (Recommendation 19).

Following this recommendation, a measure was announced in the 2024-2025 Budget for a minimum allocation amount to student-led organisations.

2. What is the intent of the requirement?

The measure recognises that SSAF revenue, collected by providers, is student money which should be used to benefit students through the delivery of services to students as set out under subsection 19-38(4) of the HESA.

The intent is to ensure that organisations led by students benefit from a consistent and predictable stream of SSAF revenue so they can plan and commit to long-term student support services, which will support students to succeed in their studies.

3. Does every provider now need to collect a SSAF?

No. The collection of the SSAF is a matter for each provider. Some providers choose not to collect a SSAF.

4. What is the new requirement and when does it commence?

From 1 January 2025, the following two requirements apply to 40 per cent of the total of the SSAF revenue a provider collects:

1. **Funding requirement:** providers must allocate a minimum of 40 per cent of their SSAF revenue to student-led organisations.
2. **Governance requirement:** a student-led organisation that receives some or all of 40 per cent of SSAF revenue is an organisation whose governing body is made up of a majority of enrolled students and/or alumni (from the preceding 3 years), with the students democratically elected by the current student population of the provider.

These two requirements do not apply to the remaining 60 per cent of SSAF revenue.

5. Are providers required to allocate 40 per cent of their budgeted SSAF revenue or 40 per cent of their actual SSAF revenue for the year to student-led organisations?

From 1 January 2025, providers are required to allocate a minimum of 40 per cent of their SSAF revenue to student-led organisations. This means actual SSAF revenue collected from students for the calendar year. SSAF revenue must be allocated to one or more student-led organisations before the end of the calendar year in which the SSAF revenue was collected by the provider.

The department understands enrolments and study mode can impact the overall amount of SSAF revenue collected in a calendar year, and the total amount of SSAF revenue may not be determined until after all SSAF payment due dates have passed.

6. When will the new requirements commence?

The requirement to allocate a minimum of 40 per cent of SSAF revenue to student-led organisations commenced on 1 January 2025.

Governance details

7. What is a student-led organisation?

Under the HESA, an organisation is a student-led organisation if its governing body is made up of a majority of students and/or alumni (from the preceding 3 years) who have been democratically elected by the current student population of the provider. Under the SSARA Guidelines, providers must also be satisfied that:

- A student-led organisation has appropriate governance arrangements, including that:
 - the governing body of the organisation makes decisions independently from the provider;
 - the organisation keeps and publishes annual audited accounts that record the organisation's income and expenditure, including in relation to transactions between the provider and the organisation;
 - the organisation has and complies with policies and procedures that relate to corporate governance standards (record keeping, risk management, fraud prevention and financial controls); and
 - the organisation provides the services set out in subsection 19-38(4) of the HESA to students using the SSAF revenue allocated to them.

8. Are alumni able to be part of a student-led organisation's governing body?

Yes. Alumni that were enrolled with the provider in any of the 3 immediately preceding calendar years are able to form part of a student-led organisation's governing body.

9. Is there any flexibility around the structure of student-led organisations receiving the 40 per cent of SSAF revenue?

Student-led organisations that receive 40 per cent of a provider's SSAF revenue will need to meet the governance requirements set out in the HESA and the SSARA Guidelines to be considered a student-led organisation. Beyond these requirements, there remains flexibility around the structure of student-led organisations, and it will be up to those student-led organisations to determine the most appropriate structure.

10. Do providers need to have formal agreements in place with student-led organisations?

It is up to providers to work with student-led organisations to determine how they will meet the governance requirements under the HESA and the SSARA Guidelines and ensure that SSAF revenue is spent in line with subsection 19-38(4) of the HESA.

11. Can student-led organisations contract a third party to provide a service on their behalf or outsource services to the provider that is currently offering a service?

Student-led organisations may choose to spend their SSAF revenue allocated to them by their provider on the delivery of services they determine, so long as these services are those set out under subsection 19-38(4) of the HESA.

The provider will need to ensure that the student-led organisation complies with the governance requirements as set out under the HESA and the SSARA Guidelines.

Transition arrangements

12. What if my institution is unable to allocate 40 per cent of SSAF revenue to student-led organisations as it will affect the services and amenities currently on offer?

If a provider is unable to allocate a minimum of 40 per cent of SSAF revenue to student-led organisations and maintain other key services (e.g. health services) to the expected level, it will be required to seek approval from the Department of Education for an agreed transition arrangement.

Agreed transition arrangements are available for up to 3 years for Table A providers and up to 5 years for non-Table A providers. Following the agreed transition period, a provider must comply with the minimum allocation legislative requirements.

13. How and when can providers apply for transition arrangements and what documentation will be required/considered?

Applications for transition arrangements are now open. Providers can apply via the [transition plan application template](#). The template provides all necessary guidance around what a transition plan application must include.

All 2025 applications are due by the end of February 2025. The department notes the constrained timeframes and parameters and will support providers needing to apply for transition arrangements.

Transition plan applications are expected to be submitted and reviewed annually to ensure progress towards meeting the requirements within the agreed transition period.

14. How long will the applications take to be approved?

The assessment and approval timeframe will be dependent on the quality and quantity of applications and the amount of follow-up each application will require. The department will notify each applicant individually of the outcome of the transition agreement.

Reporting and accountability

15. Where does the responsibility lie for ensuring student-led organisations are able to manage the SSAF funding allocated to them?

The HESA sets out the requirements for how providers must apply 40 per cent of the SSAF they collect.

Providers continue to be responsible for SSAF compliance, including the requirement to only spend money on the services set out under subsection 19-38(4) of the HESA.

It is a matter for providers as to how they work with their student-led organisations to achieve the legislative requirements, including consultation requirements under Part 3 of the SSARA guidelines.

16. Can a provider withhold SSAF revenue from a student-led organisation if it is concerned that the allocated SSAF revenue is not being spent in line with the HESA?

Student-led organisations that are eligible to receive 40 per cent of SSAF funding under the HESA must meet the legislative requirements. Under subsection 19-38(4) of the HESA, SSAF funding must only be allocated for the allowable purposes.

It is a provider's responsibility to ensure that SSAF expenditure is compliant with the HESA.

If a provider has sufficient evidence that SSAF funds are not being used for the allowable purposes set out under subsection 19-38(4) of the HESA, then they have an obligation to act.

17. Are there any new reporting obligations in relation to the requirement for the use of 40 per cent of SSAF revenue?

Providers are currently required to make publicly available a SSAF Allocation Report within six months of the end of their annual reporting period (by 30 June or 31 December, whichever is applicable), which demonstrates how SSAF revenue was allocated and spent in a particular year and how providers consulted with students on the use of SSAF revenue.

The [SSAF Allocation Report template](#) has been amended to include new reporting requirements in relation to the 40 per cent SSAF revenue allocation to student-led organisations. In addition to making the SSAF Allocation Report publicly available, providers are now also required to provide their SSAF Allocation Report to the department via email to SSAF@education.gov.au.

18. Will providers be responsible for acquitting and reporting on the 40 per cent SSAF revenue allocated to student-led organisations?

Provider responsibilities for SSAF acquittal and reporting remains unchanged and apply to all SSAF revenue collected by a provider.

Providers are responsible for ensuring all SSAF revenue is spent in accordance with subsection 19-38(4) of the HESA. Providers declare as part of their annual financial reporting that SSAF funds have been spent in accordance with the HESA.

Providers need to work with their student-led organisations and be satisfied that they have spent their allocated SSAF funding in line with subsection 19-38(4) of the HESA. This is a matter for each provider to manage and should already be in place where funds are allocated to student-led organisations.

Providers will continue to have discretion in allocating the remaining 60 per cent of SSAF revenue.