

SSAF – Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF)?

In 2011, the Australian Parliament passed legislation (link to PDF of Higher Education Support Act) allowing universities and other higher education providers to charge a fee to fund student services and amenities.

How much is SSAF in 2017?

Students are charged a fee of up to \$294 per student - this fee will increase with the rate of inflation. Students studying on a part-time basis cannot be charged more than 75% of the maximum amount that students studying on a full time basis are charged.

If you would like to see what SSAF rate you should be paying, please [click here](#).

How is SSAF paid?

You are not required to pay your SSAF fees upfront, students can defer payment as part of the Higher Education Loan Program (HELP) or HECs (as it was previously known).

To check your entitlement, please [click here](#).

What can the SSAF be spent on?

The Higher Education Support Act outlines a list of activities that the SSAF can be used to fund:

1. providing food or drink to students on a campus of the higher education provider;
2. supporting a sporting or other recreational activity by students;
3. supporting the administration of a club most of whose members are students;
4. caring for children of students;
5. providing legal services to students;
6. promoting the health or welfare of students;
7. helping students secure accommodation;
8. helping students obtain employment or advice on careers;
9. helping students with their financial affairs;
10. helping students obtain insurance against personal accidents;
11. supporting debating by students;
12. providing libraries and reading rooms (other than those provided for academic purposes) for students;
13. supporting an artistic activity by students;
14. supporting the production and dissemination to students of media whose content is provided by students;
15. helping students develop skills for study, by means other than undertaking *courses of study in which they are enrolled;
16. advising on matters arising under the higher education provider's rules (however described);

17. advocating students' interests in matters arising under the higher education provider's rules (however described);
18. giving students information to help them in their orientation;
19. helping meet the specific needs of *overseas students relating to their welfare, accommodation and employment.

SSAF funds may also be used to fund infrastructure required to support the activities listed above.

What does Monash University do with SSAF?

Monash allocates funds to:

- Monash Student Organisations (MSOs)
- Spending on University controlled facilities
- Spending on University capital projects and service provision.

How are SSAF allocations determined?

The distribution of the SSAF is based on allocation principles approved by Monash University Council in December 2011, which state:

- 40% is allocated to Monash University directly for the provision of services and amenities to students
- another 40% is allocated to the Monash Student Organisations (MSOs) for the provision of services and amenities (this is where MSA SSAF funding comes from, which is shared amongst all other MSOs)
- and 20% is allocated for facilities and amenities expenditure of a direct benefit to students at each campus. Projects are determined by the University in consultation with student representatives.

The SSAF can't be used for the provision of academic service, to support political parties or the election of a person to a Commonwealth, state, territory parliament or local government body.

How are SSAF allocations for each Monash Student Organisations determined?

SSAF funding provided by the University to MSOs are designed to sustain and support the student association to enable them to provide essential student activities, services and facilities to students. The University allocates funding based on full time equivalent enrolments on each campus annually.

To see the 2016 Annual Report of SSAF issued by Monash University please [click here](#).

How much SSAF funding does MSA receive?

There is some confusion as to how much MSOs received. The reality is, that in 2016, MSA received 41.9% of the 40% set aside for Monash Student Organisations. This 41.9% is equivalent to 16.7% of the total SSAF collected.

How is MSA held accountable for its SSAF spending?

MSA receives SSAF funding from the University under the terms of a SSAF Agreement. This Agreement outlines MSA's legal responsibilities around SSAF expenditure and mandates that MSA reports its spending to the University on an annual basis.

Moreover, MSA is held directly accountable to its students through the Monash Student Council (MSC) which involves democratic decision making processes that allow students and their representatives to determine the annual budget, and to establish the organisation's strategic direction.

Additionally, MSA must report annually to a variety of entities as per the [Corporate Governance reporting statement](#).

What does MSA do with the money it receives?

Established in 1961, MSA has a proud history of serving and protecting students' interest with a long list of achievements, both on a University level and a larger scale.

MSA's principal areas of activity and responsibilities include:

1. MSA Student Services and Activities

Clubs & Societies

MSA Recreational Library

Mature Age and Part-Time student services (MAPS)

MSA Reception: Information and Membership services

MU International Student Service & Lounge (MUISS)

MU Student Theatre (MUST)

Student Advocacy

Workers Rights Advice

Student Entertainment and Welfare services

Student Legal Services liaison with Monash Oakleigh Legal Service

Student Tax Return completion assistance

Radio Monash

MSA Volunteering and Host Scheme

Student Representatives:

Activities

Disability and Carers

Education (Academic Affairs)

Education (Public Affairs)

Environment and Social Justice

Indigenous

Lot's Wife Newspaper

People of Colour

Queer

Volunteer program/HOST Scheme and HOST Year

Welfare

Women's

2. MSA Commercial Operations & Social Enterprise (SE) Activities

Monash Training and Professional Development/RTO

Sir John's Bar

MSA Catering Services

The Bikery (SE)

Wholefoods Restaurant (SE)

3. Facilities

MSA areas and spaces including Queer Lounge, Women's Room, Volunteer Lounge, Clubs and Societies spaces, Theatre, Meeting Rooms and Public areas

4. MSA Support Services

Finance & Administration

Human Resources

Information Technology Services Marketing Services and Design Studio

Vancora welfare and event support Food Van

5. MSA Executive

Service delivery and development of new initiatives. Budgetary, legal, media, industrial and staffing oversight

6. Monash Student Council Provides overall strategic direction Policy oversight

Ensures accountability of elected representatives

MSA organises and hosts many academic and nonacademic events each year, these include:

1. Student Welfare Programs

a. Free Food Mondays

b. Free Breakfasts

c. Weekly BBQs

d. Health & Wellbeing Events (eg. Stress Less Weeks, Yoga, R U OK Day, etc.)

2. Social Campaigns and Awareness

3. Clubs and Societies Grants
4. Teaching Awards
5. Workshops and Panel Discussions:
 - a. English Peer Mentoring Programs
 - b. Drug Policy Forums
 - c. Women's Industry Night
6. Social Events

MSA also receives a SSAF Capital Allocation from the University based on an application process. In the past few years, the allocations granted include:

2015

1. Additional power pods on Lemon Scented Lawn
2. Student kitchens and microwave room refits
3. New C&S lockers
4. Wholefoods Restaurant refurbishment
5. MUST Elevated goods platform
6. MSA Recreational Library refurbishment
7. MAPS computer lab refurbishment
8. Disabilities and Carers Office creation
9. C&S faculty club room upgrades (Education, BCSS, Science Student Societies)
10. C&S space refurbishment
11. Sir John's Bar equipment upgrades
12. MUISS lounge upgrade

2016

1. Radio Monash sound proofing
2. Student Advocacy & Support lounge refit
3. MSA Volunteering lounge refurbishment
4. MUST lighting upgrade
5. MUST theatre repairs
6. MUST courtyard upgrade
7. MUST costume room upgrade
8. Survival Centre access control for all students
9. Portable notice boards for events and presentations by students
10. Halal and vegetarian portable BBQs

2017

1. Restoration of public areas in MSA areas, corridors and entrances to Library and Wholefoods

2. Sir John's Bar DJ equipment upgrade
3. People of Colour office creation
4. Materials Engineering club room upgrade
5. Chemical Engineering club room upgrade
6. Biomed club room upgrade
7. Electrical Engineering club room upgrade
8. MUMUS club room upgrade
9. MAPS kitchenette completion and carpet replacement
10. Radio Monash area upgrades
11. Radio Monash control panel upgrade

Is MSA and its services only for available to undergraduate students?

No, MSA events and services are accessible to all Monash students and staff, however being geographically located at the Clayton campus we predominantly service the Clayton campus.

MSA believes that being students at the Monash University is what gives us a shared experience and shared interests. While being a graduate student or an undergraduate student may impact your day-to-day University life, enrolment status should not be something that is used to keep students apart or limit our capacity to interact.

Is MSA financially accountable?

Yes, MSA is audited annually by an independent organisation. The outcomes of this audit as well as the MSA financial report is made available to the public at the MSA Annual General Meeting as well as under the [Governance section of the MSA website](#).

MSA has a Funding Agreement signed with the University and is required to comply with this agreement (as well as state and federal laws) at all times.

MSA is also registered as a not-for-profit entity for the purpose of advancing education with the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission (ACNC). MSA is required by ACNC to fulfill its reporting and obligations in order to maintain its status and registration.

Additionally, MSA also submit the financial audit summary to Consumer Affairs Victoria annually.

MSA through its Finance Audit Risk Committee meets four times a year to discuss the outcome of the audit process, policies and procedures review, financial performance review and risk management.

What does MSA do with its unspent income?

MSA derives income from SSAF and commercial activities.

The accumulation of reserves is supported in the current SSAF Funding Agreement with the University. The reserve allows MSA to run as a not-for-profit entity. They allow a flattening of the surplus/deficit wave pattern we endure as part of our processes.

The reserve serve two functions:

1. Staff entitlement. A large proportion of the reserve is made up of a staff entitlement fund. These funds serve to provide employees protection.

2. Insurance. The balance is held as an insurance against future legislative changes to SSAF funding configuration. These funds will allow MSA to continue to deliver its services whilst SSAF funding negotiations (which can last for up to two years) are occurring, without impact on student experiences.

The MSA reserve is managed with a moderately conservative approach, this ensures that funds are secured whilst enabling the organisation to generate some additional supplementary income.

How can I have a say in what MSA does?

MSA welcomes and values feedback from everyone so that we may serve and protect student interests' to the best of our ability. All Monash Student Council meetings and Committee meetings are open to student attendance and all students are entitled to:

- Move motions allocating funds to events, activities or programmes
- Participate in discussion
- Apply for funding for events or activities
- Run for election to the committees, offices and Student Council

MSA also conducts regular surveys to engage with students about their needs. If you have feedback or enquiries please email msa@monash.edu.