

# Australian Catholic University

## Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF)

### 2024 Allocation Report

## Introduction

The *Higher Education Support (Student Services, Amenities, Representation and Advocacy) Guidelines 2022* (SSARA Guidelines) require higher education providers to provide a publicly available report on student services and amenities fee (SSAF) allocations and actual expenditure for the year as part of their annual reporting and in the form approved by the Minister. This *SSAF Allocation Report* is the form approved by the Minister.

The information provided in this *SSAF Allocation Report* does **not** require auditing by a financial accountant. The SSAF expenditure reporting is a separate process and remains unchanged, more information can be found in the [Financial Statements Guidelines](#) for Table A and B providers, and in the [Financial Viability Instructions: Applicants and Providers of FEE-HELP \(FVI\)](#) for all other approved providers.

# SSAF Consultation and Achievements

This report outlines the activities and programs that were provided for ACU students using the 2024 Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF) in accordance with the 2003 Higher Education Support Act.

ACU consults students each year to determine how SSAF should be allocated based on student feedback via:

- Formal consultation with democratically elected student leaders (ACU National Student Association); and
- An annual all student survey asking students to identify/rank services, activities and amenities that are most important to them and should be supported by SSAF.

The annual SSAF survey was sent to 28,935 students and a total of 2,035 students completed the survey (7.03% response rate). At the individual item level, “Services to support students who have experienced sexual harm” and “Disability support services” were of highest importance.

The top 5 most important services and amenities rated by students were:

Rank	Category
1	Sexual harm
2	Disability support services
3	Health and Safety
4	Counselling
5	Careers advice or support

Below is a high-level summary of the key activities funded by SSAF in 2024.

## 1. Student Safeguarding and Safety

In line with ACU’s mission to uphold human dignity, the University is committed to fostering and maintaining safe learning environments for its students and staff. ACU’s approach to sexual harm prevention and response is externally referenced and informed by evidence. The work undertaken in 2024 included:

- Training (and refresher training) of all Student Life staff in sexual harm prevention and response for the benefit of students.
- Successful appointment of a full-time Student Safety Coordinator (previously vacant position) to provide support, information and case management for students who have experienced sexual assault, sexual harassment or other forms of sexual harm.
- The ‘Respectful Relationships’ Module became compulsory for all students (previously only commencing students were required to complete).
- The development and implementation of a new compulsory ‘Protecting Our Children: Recognising and Responding to Child Maltreatment’ module for all students.
- Planning and preparation for the implementation of the new National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence (the National Code).

There has been a 30% increase in students accessing the services of Safeguarding and Student Safety in 2024.

## 2. Access and Disability Service

The Access and Disability Service continues to enhance student success and inclusion at ACU. In 2024, the service supported 2,726 registered students, with 963 identifying with sensory, neurological, cognitive or learning disabilities. The Access and Disability Service remains committed to promoting equity and accessibility through innovative programs and partnerships that align with ACU's mission of advancing the common good.

One of the key SSAF funded initiatives in 2024 was the establishment of Low Sensory Retreat Rooms on six ACU campuses (excluding Blacktown), providing calming environments designed to support neurodivergent students and those with sensory, mental health, or learning needs. These retreats offer weighted blankets, recliners, soft lighting,

and sensory tools, creating a welcoming space for all students to decompress and recharge. Plans are underway to expand this service to the Blacktown campus, ensuring equitable access across all campuses.

### 3. Medical Centres

The ACU Medical Centres provided 6,608 episodes of care for ACU students in 2024. Below is a breakdown of the approximate attendance by location:

- Brisbane: 500 students
- Melbourne: 650 students
- North Sydney: <100 students

Access to Medical Services in the wider community are currently restricted due to cost and availability. ACU's medical services have reduced the barrier of access and enabled ACU students to access health support including preventative support and chronic disease management at no cost.

### 4. Counselling

ACU counsellors create a safe and supportive space for students to address concerns and develop the skills needed to build resilience and reach their goals. All students have access to free and confidential counselling services when faced with personal, mental health, or general wellbeing challenges that may be impacting their life, work, or studies. In 2024, 5,345 appointments were booked with the ACU counselling service and the 24-Hour Mental Health Support Line received 475 calls.

Below is a summary of the most common reasons students sought counselling support:

Broad Category	Subcategory
Mental Health concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• anxiety</li><li>• depression</li><li>• severe psychological distress</li></ul>
Education and University Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• concerns about academic performance and progress</li><li>• motivations towards study</li><li>• student administrative issues</li></ul>
Personal matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• life transitions and adjustment issues</li><li>• self-esteem and self-development</li><li>• grief and loss</li></ul>
Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Relationships</li><li>• family issues</li><li>• peer relationships</li></ul>
General Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• stress management</li><li>• health related problems or illnesses</li><li>• sleep disorders or disturbances</li></ul>
Trauma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• thoughts of suicide</li><li>• family violence</li><li>• post-traumatic stress disorder</li><li>• Addictions</li></ul>

### 5. Student Advocacy Service

In 2024, Student Advocacy conducted 2,165 one-on-one student consultations in person or online, providing support on a wide range of issues. In addition to these individual consultations, Student Advocacy delivered 9 information sessions and offered online video resources, equipping students with knowledge about university policies, procedures, and their available options. Approximately 200 students attended these sessions.

The Advocacy Service is also contributing significantly to student retention and success. In the first half of 2024, 107 students who received a show cause or termination of enrolment notification came to Student Advocacy for support. 86 students (or 80.4%) were able to maintain their enrolment with the support they received from the Student Advocacy Service.

## **6. Legal Advice Service**

This SSAF funded legal advice service offers up to two 45-minute virtual sessions with a specialist lawyer who can provide written advice to students. This service was contacted by 33 students and 23 written pieces of advice were provided. This service can assist students with difficult matters which keep them in their course and gives them a real sense of the support being offered by the University through SSAF.

## **7. Careers and Employability**

In 2024, Careers and Employability implemented a new team structure that focused on aligning and embedding career development learning (CDL) into the curriculum and the core study experience at ACU, in addition to providing our traditional career support measures. Building on the work completed in 2023, the new faculty-based Career Educator teams utilised the career development learning framework (CDLF) to identify key units and learning outcomes in each degree relevant to career development and then collaborated with academics and faculty leadership to develop and deliver content, resources and experiences that address career principles relevant to that stage of study.

This approach has enabled a new level of equity and structure in our efforts to ensure that every ACU student receives meaningful career education and support as part of their ACU experience. As a result of this approach, the Careers & Employability team were able to:

- Embed 265 instances of CDL (including workshops, videos, tool, resources and more) across 82 units in 29 degrees, with 35% of UG degrees receiving 3 or more instances of CDL
- Commence the embedding of CDL into 12 new degrees (70% increase from 2023)
- Partnered with faculty leadership through monthly meetings with ADLTs to ensure alignment with faculty priorities and needs
- Develop a network of canvas-based discipline-specific career pages for each ACU degree, featuring labour-market data, graduate/casual jobs, self-assessment tools and more

The efforts of 2024 will be ongoing in 2025 and expanded upon through 3 major projects to further support the career development and work transitions of ACU students both within and in support of their core studies. These projects include:

- Expanding the network of career Canvas pages to provide additional services and resources, including pages for veterans, international students and students with a disability
- Further develop the CDLF and create a 'careers curriculum' to strengthen the content and materials that we embed into coursework
- Implement a strategy to increase career service visibility and engagement with students, including the launch of a career planning dashboard (leveraging Lightcast labour market insights) to enhance personalised and proactive career exploration and preparation for students.

Other highlights include:

- Providing 564 students with one-on-one career consultations.
- Providing over 1,1750 students with self-service career support and practice materials, e.g., the 'Big Interview' video interview practice platform.
- Hosting over 4,700 jobs and volunteering opportunities, which were accessed over 58,000 times by ACU students

## **8. Orientation**

In 2024, approximately 8,100 students attended an on-campus orientation event across our seven Australian campuses, while around 100 students participated in the online orientation program.

ACU continues to expand its orientation offerings, prioritising tailored and timely support for commencing students.

## 9. Elite Athlete and Performer Program

The Elite Athlete and Performer Program (EAPP) provides support services for high-achieving student athletes and performers. Upon acceptance to the program, students can access a range of benefits including course and admissions advice, priority timetabling, academic support, and the opportunity to apply for financial assistance. Seven students and eight alumni competed at the 2024 Paris Olympics and Paralympics; the largest ever ACU Olympic and Paralympic cohort. Additionally, two students were travelling reserves for the Paris games and 28% of EAPP members were Australian representatives and/or professionally contracted athletes and performers. In 2024, there were:

- 458 active EAPP students
- 98 students received an EAPP financial scholarship
- 41 students received an EAPP representative subsidy
- 61 students received an EAPP UniSport subsidy to represent ACU at UniSport Nationals events

## 10. ACU National Student Association (ACUNSA)

ACUNSA ensures there is student representation at the university by giving each campus a voice on various committees and advocating for student interests through consultations. Other key activities supported by ACUNSA members include:

- Administration of the Student Travel and Training Grant (STTG), which helps students cover costs related to attending conferences, participating in humanitarian activities, completing practicums, or engaging in other travel or training that enhances their academic experience.
- Hosting of annual ACUNSA Council conferences. In 2024, the ACUNSA Council hosted three conferences where members collaborated to develop strategies to support the national student body. Throughout the year, they also received feedback from university staff managing key programs and projects.

The induction of incoming ACUNSA and Campus Student Association Councils took place in November 2024. Council members participated in a week-long leadership program, which included sessions with internal and external speakers and provided the students with the opportunity to shape their plans for 2025.

## 11. Student Life

Each semester, with support from SSAF allocations, ACU offers a variety of activities, events, and programs designed to help students fully engage with university life, develop their talents, and foster a sense of belonging.

These initiatives encourage students to form lasting friendships, build confidence, and make the most of their university experience by participating in activities beyond the classroom.

Student Life activities are open to all students, regardless of campus, study discipline, mode of study, or year level. Throughout the semester, a range of weekly on-campus, off-campus, and online events are available to help students stay connected, supported, and inspired. The student voice across the university has become stronger, with increased participation from Indigenous, postgraduate, and international students in both local and national student representative councils.

The Student Life engagement strategy is designed to support both new and continuing students, with hundreds of engagement opportunities available across all campuses throughout the year. Below is a highlight of key on and off campus activities in 2024:

- Cultural Festivals - Holi; Eid; International food.
- Indigenous events - music; food tasting; yarning circle.
- Faculty based events – International Day of the Midwife, Nurses Day.
- Sporting activities: Table Tennis, pool, foosball, lawn bowls activities, basketball, etc.
- Live music; music lessons
- Trivia and Karaoke Nights
- Paint and Sip activities
- Sustainability events including Community Closet
- Big Day Out; Harbour Cruises; Bay Cruises;

- Crafternoons, friendship bracelet making; stress ball making.
- Provision of Student Study Packs
- ACU Team focused events: Equity Week;
- Mission Week; Advocacy to support Advocacy Service.
- Key Topic Events: International Women's Day; IDAHOBIT;
- SLO Cookers - online, real-time cooking program for students
- Movie days/nights
- Adventure Camps with PD included
- Career/study focused events

Students know about the events through the ACU Life platform and other communications channels throughout the semester. There are approximately 10,000 student members on ACULife who have direct emails about each event on campus.

## 12. Sport

ACU Sport provides all students the opportunity to participate in sport, recreation, or exercise. This involvement will enhance students' physical and mental health & wellness, fostering social networks and a sense of community. Their engagement in any form of these activities will positively influence students' academic outcomes. ACU Sport provides the following programs and opportunities -

*Uni Sport* – In 2024 ACU placed 11th in the overall champions pennant tally winning 2 x Division 1 championships (men's water polo & women's netball), 1 x silver Division 1 championship (women's water polo), 1 x Division 2 bronze (women's volleyball).

ACU also came 2nd at the Indigenous Nationals and 6th in the women's University Basketball Program. 177 students participated in these events in 2024.

*ACU Sport Clubs* – Our ACU FC Sydney Football Club won 2 women's championships and was also voted a top ten club in Australia. You can read more about the achievement [HERE](#). Our other notable sports clubs include Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane Cheer, Melbourne Dance, Victoria Outdoors, and Brisbane Football Club. The clubs provide a structured, safe, and community environment for all ACU students. 280 student sports club PAID members

*Social Sport* – Weekly recreational sporting competitions and on-campus events for students.

- 299 students participated in social sport programs & events
- 1930 students attended on-campus events and activations (formerly the Track)

*ACU Active* – health clubs based on the Melbourne and North Sydney campuses, including a range of fitness classes and reduced membership fees for students.

- Provided 618 students health and wellness services
- 865 student placement hours

## 13. Campus Dean Events

In 2024, Campus Deans were allocated SSAF grants to provide opportunities and initiatives for students to meet with the Campus Dean on their respective campuses. These initiatives were aimed to strengthen relationships between students and the Campus Deans, while promoting a sense of community. This included a Pool Tournament (students Vs Melbourne Campus Dean), a cultural festival at Blacktown and Melbourne, a weaving workshop with Equity and Inclusion and Wellbeing morning teas with the Campus Dean at Strathfield.

## 14. Mission and Ministry

To raise awareness of Mary MacKillop and her impact on the university as a patron for both the North Sydney Campus and the university, Mission and Ministry received an SSAF allocation for a day of celebration and festivities. Food trucks, music and arts and crafts were enjoyed by many students.

Approximately 30 students registered to attend the Ignite Conferences in Sydney & Brisbane, supported by SSAF. A further 40 students attended the conference supported by the Mission and Ministry Portfolio. Ignite is the largest annual Catholic Youth Conference in Australia. It is a 4-day conference with keynotes, workshops, rallies, live music, prayer and sacraments.

Many students gave feedback in relation to deepening of faith and encountering Jesus for the first time. At least 30 students have gone on to participate in the Frontier Leadership Program offered through Campus Ministry. Nearly all students who attended have become active on campus - participating and leading Campus Ministry events (e.g. Random Acts of Kindness, Day, Faith Formation Groups, Retreats, Social events, and being part of the Remembrance Day services).

# SSAF Revenue Summary

	2024 Allocation \$ <sup>1</sup>	2024 Actual \$
SSAF Revenue	\$8,179,638	\$9,289,780
SSAF revenue carried forward from 2023	\$0	\$0
<b>Total SSAF funds available for 2024</b>	<b>\$8,179,638</b>	<b>\$9,289,780</b>
SSAF revenue carried over into 2025	\$0	\$0

<sup>1</sup> Allocation refers to the SSAF funds expected to be received in the reported year (i.e., budgeted SSAF revenue).

## SSAF Charge Summary

The student services and amenities fee (SSAF) charged to students must not be above the maximum fee for a calendar year. The maximum SSAF is indexed annually as required by the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* (the Act). In 2024 the maximum SSAF was \$350.

Student Status	2024 SSAF charged \$ <sup>2</sup>	Number of students charged in 2024 <sup>3</sup>
Full-time <sup>1</sup> (> 0.75 EFTSL)	\$350	22,152
Part-time <sup>1</sup> (< 0.75 EFTSL)	\$262	4,619
<b>Total:</b>		26,771

<sup>1</sup> Note: As per Part 2 of the *Higher Education Support (Administration) Guidelines 2022* (Administration Guidelines), students studying on a part-time basis must not be charged more than 75 per cent of the maximum SSAF that a higher education provider determines for students studying on a full-time basis. The term “part-time basis” means a study load of less than 75 per cent of the normal full-time student load for the period to which the fee relates. As per part 7 of the Administration Guidelines, the normal EFTSL value for a full-time student studying over a period of one year is 1.0.

<sup>2</sup> Note: As per Part 2 of the Administration Guidelines, a higher education provider may choose to determine a different SSAF for particular categories of persons, including a zero amount.

<sup>3</sup> Note: Students are categorised as full-time or part-time students based on the total EFTSL value of the units of study they undertook in [insert reported year]. For example, a student undertook a full-time study load in Semester 1 which was equal to 0.5 EFTSL and undertook a part-time study load in Semester 2 which was equal to 0.375 EFTSL. This student would be categorised as a full-time student in [insert reported year] as the total EFTSL they undertook in [insert reported year] was equal to 0.875.

Student Status	2024 SSAF charged \$ <sup>2</sup>	Approx. number of SSAF students remote learning 2024 <sup>4</sup>
ACU Online Full-time	\$174	871
ACU Online Part-time	\$130	1,347
<b>Total:</b>		2,218

<sup>4</sup> Note: The Department of Education understands that not all higher education providers capture mode of study in their information systems and many students undertake a mixed mode of study such as face-to-face and remote learning. The data provided above is for students who undertook remote learning for 100% of their units of study. Please note, due to the limitations of our information systems, the above data may be approximate.

# SSAF Allocation Summary

## Key areas of expenditure 2024

Subsection 19-38(4) of the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* (the Act) provides a list of 19 allowable expenditure items which higher education providers may allocate and spend SSAF revenue on.

Please note, under subsection 19-38 of the Act, SSAF revenue must not be spent to support a political party or the election of a person as a member of the legislature of the Commonwealth, State or a Territory, or a local government body.

Key Area	2024 Total Allocation \$	2024 Total Actual Spend \$	Are services available online?	Estimated No. of students accessing services
1. Health Services (Counselling, Disability, Student Safeguard and Safety, University Medical & Wellbeing Centres)	\$2,173,010	\$3,720,495	Disability – Yes Counselling - Yes  Medical Centres – Yes online booking, not appointments.	Disability – 2726 Safeguarding – 120 Counselling - 3205  Medical Centres – 6608 (student visits). Est individual students = 650 (Melb), 500 (Bris), <100 (North Sydney).
2. Clubs or other associations (Student Associations, Distribution, Student stipends)	\$403,215	\$851,629	Some online events and training PDs	3028 paid members  9467 members  33 student leaders  TOTAL: 12,528
a. Sporting	Refer Key Area 11			
b. Internal student politics				38
c. Gender, sexuality, ethnicity, race, or nationality-based				209
d. Areas-of-study related e.g. law				2551
e. Other activities e.g. music, debate, chess				59
f. Other				171
g. National lessons & programs			Yes	Approx. 48,000 (views of online programs)
h. Semester events				3,010
3. Employment/career services	\$1,074,317	\$1,185,056	Yes	Career services: 1024 Jobs board views: 58,407 Embedded curriculum delivery: approx. 22,000

Key Area	2024 Total Allocation \$	2024 Total Actual Spend \$	Are services available online?	Estimated No. of students accessing services
4. Legal aid	\$52,300	\$7,799	Yes	33 contacted the service 23 advice provided
5. Student Life	\$1,339,027	\$949,229	No	11,282
6. Advocacy	\$14,500	\$245,416	Yes	2,365
7. Orientation	\$600,000	\$470,635	Yes	8,194
8. Student Development	\$0	\$35,263	Yes	330
9. National Competitions (University Basketball League)	\$101,172	\$109,041	No	27
10. University Sport Australia Endorsed Programs	\$95,655	\$108,664	No	150
11. ACU Sports Clubs	\$445,492	\$388,144	No	280
12. Gyms, Fitness Classes & Facilities	\$515,556	\$467,101	Yes	618
13. Social Sports & Community Events	\$187,243	\$38,004	No	299
14. ACU Sport	\$576,941	\$293,758	No	1930
15. Elite Athlete & Performer Program	\$601,210	\$419,546	Yes	458
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$8,179,638</b>	<b>\$9,289,780</b>		

Organisations, bodies or third-party providers that received SSAF funding in 2024

**1. Allocation of SSAF revenue – non-student-led organisations**

Organisation Name <sup>1</sup>	Australian Business Number (ABN)	Supported Key Area	Total SSAF Funding Received from provider \$	% of total SSAF revenue collected by the Provider
			\$0	0%
<b>Total SSAF provided to non student-led organisations</b>			<b>\$0</b>	<b>0%</b>

<sup>1</sup> Note: Only organisations, bodies or third-party providers who receive over \$1,000 in SSAF funding are expected to be disclosed.

As the legislative requirement for this allocation commenced from 1 January 2025, the Australian Catholic University (ACU) did not implement the 40% student-led allocation of Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF) revenue in 2024.

ACU has proactively established an approved student led body in preparation for the new requirements and is working towards allocating the mandated 40% of SSAF revenue to this body over a transitional period, from 2025 onwards. Our transition plan has been approved by the Department of Education (to allocate 20% in 2025, 30% in 2026 and 40% in 2027 to the student led body). This approach aligns with the national reforms and demonstrates ACU's commitment to enhancing student leadership and representation in the allocation of SSAF funds.

## 2. Allocation of SSAF revenue to student led organisations – evidence of meeting requirement of 40 per cent

Organisation Name <sup>2</sup>	Australian Business Number (ABN)	Supported Key Area	SSAF Funding Received from Provider \$	% of total revenue collected by the provider	If below 40 per cent, is there an agreed transition plan in place	Details of transition plan
<i>Use same organisation title as next table</i>	[XX XXX XXX XXX]	Key Area [insert key area reference number]	\$	%	Y/N	Agreed on XX OR Submitted on XX and pending approval
<b>Total SSAF provided to student-led organisations</b>			\$	%		

## 3. Attestation that student led organisations in receipt of a minimum of 40 per cent of SSAF revenue are meeting governance requirements

Organisation Name <sup>1</sup>	Majority student-led	Democratically elected leaders	Independence	Audited accounts	Corporate Governance policies and procedures established and adhered to	If replying no on any measure, is there an agreed transition plan in place?	Details of transition plan
<i>Use same organisation title as previous table</i>	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Agreed on XX OR Submitted on XX and pending approval
	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		

<sup>2</sup> Note: Only organisations, bodies or third-party providers who receive over \$1,000 in SSAF funding are expected to be disclosed.

## Declaration by Person of Authority

I, Patrick Woods, Chief Operating Officer of Australian Catholic University, declare that the information provided in this Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF) Allocation Report is to the best of my knowledge true, complete and correct.

I further attest that the information provided in this Report meets the requirements of the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* and the Higher Education Support (Student Services, Amenities, Representation and Advocacy) Guidelines 2022 and that, where transition arrangements have either been sought or approved, information is provided on this.



.....  
Signature of Person making Declaration

PATRICK WOODS

.....  
Full name of Person making Declaration

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER, AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY

.....  
Position of Person making Declaration

30 JUNE 2025

.....  
Date