Southern Cross University

Student Services and Amenities Fee
Student Survey 2024 Report

Background

The SSAF survey of students was conducted in 2024 by the Office of Vice President (Students) and Registrar to collect feedback from students on their priorities for expenditure of Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF) revenue in 2025. The survey also measures the current level of awareness amongst students of SSAF and feedback on the services which are currently supported by SSAF money.

Communication

Students were invited to complete the survey from the 24 June – 7 July 2024. A total of 14 198 students required to pay SSAF were invited to complete the survey by email with an individual survey link.*

As an incentive for students, those who completed the Survey could elect to go into the draw to win one of five $50 gift vouchers. The survey completion time was estimated to take about three minutes.

The SSAF Survey was further promoted through:

- Email
- Blackboard login page announcement
- SMS

Survey Design

The survey questions are provided in appendix 1 attached to this report.

The survey included seven questions to measure current SSAF awareness and satisfaction amongst students.

The key question on SSAF spending priorities asked respondents to choose the % of SSAF they would allocate to each of the 19 allowable spending areas (choosing at least 5 different priority areas.)

Students were provided with examples of what could and couldn't be funded – this was made available on the SSAF website.†

Several free text questions allowed students to provide comments and suggestions on SSAF spending.

A summary of the response data and some qualitative comments are reported below.

Survey Response

A total of 481 responses were received. The response rate is 3.38% which is slightly more in comparison to 2023. 2479 students engaged with the survey link sent to them, but only 481 completed the survey.

*SSAF exempt students: International Offshore, Preparing for Success, Transition to Uni, Higher Degree Research, incoming cross institutional, incarcerated students, English language course, Undergraduate and Postgraduate Qualifying Programs, International SCU Sydney, SCU Melbourne and SCU Perth.

†https://www.scu.edu.au/current-students/student-administration/fees-and-charges/student- services-and-amenities-fee-ssaf/ssaf-funding/#d.en.239812

SSAF Awareness Results

Just over half of student respondents are aware of the services and activities that are funded or supported by SSAF.

55% aware SSAF funds services and activities
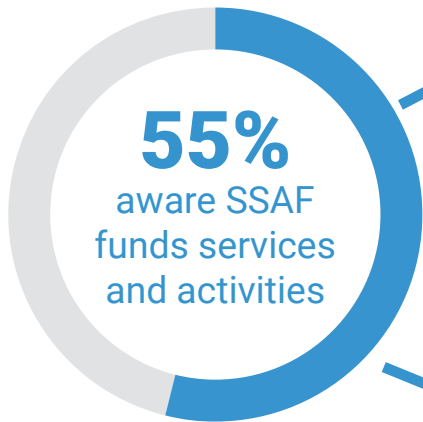
Students who were not aware that SSAF funds services and activities were not asked further awareness and satisfaction questions (Q2, Q3, Q4, Q5, Q6,Q7)

86% aware SSAF funds SAs
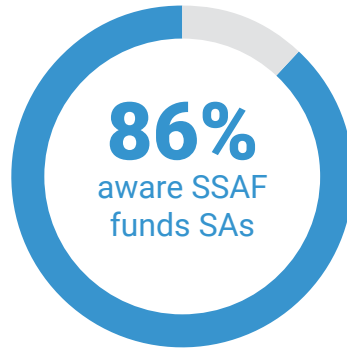
86% of the students aware of the SSAF services and activities also knew SSAF funds the Student Associations (SAs) and Clubs

37% involved in SAs
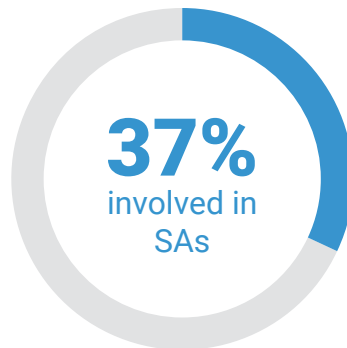
37% of the students aware of the SSAF services are involved in a Student Association or club.

Table 1: Awareness of SSAF

	n	%
Are you aware of the services and activities that are funded or supported by SSAF?	481	100
Yes	264	55
No	217	45
Are you aware that SSAF funds your student associations and clubs?	264	100
Yes	227	86
No	37	14
Are you involved in any associations or clubs?	264	100
Yes	67	37
No	197	63

SSAF Service Usage and Satisfaction Results

Figure 1 compares the service usage and satisfaction.*

90% of the survey participants reported satisfaction with the services funded through SSAF, with Orientation and Student Association led services and activities being most widely used. Summaries of the free text responses for each service are given below.

Orientation
Positve experience, satisfaction with the service, informative orientation, and supportive staff.
Not very useful

Advocacy
My situation has been taken into consideration, and effort has been made for my benefit.
Did not organise to meet with my course teachers and only provided general info

First Year Advisers
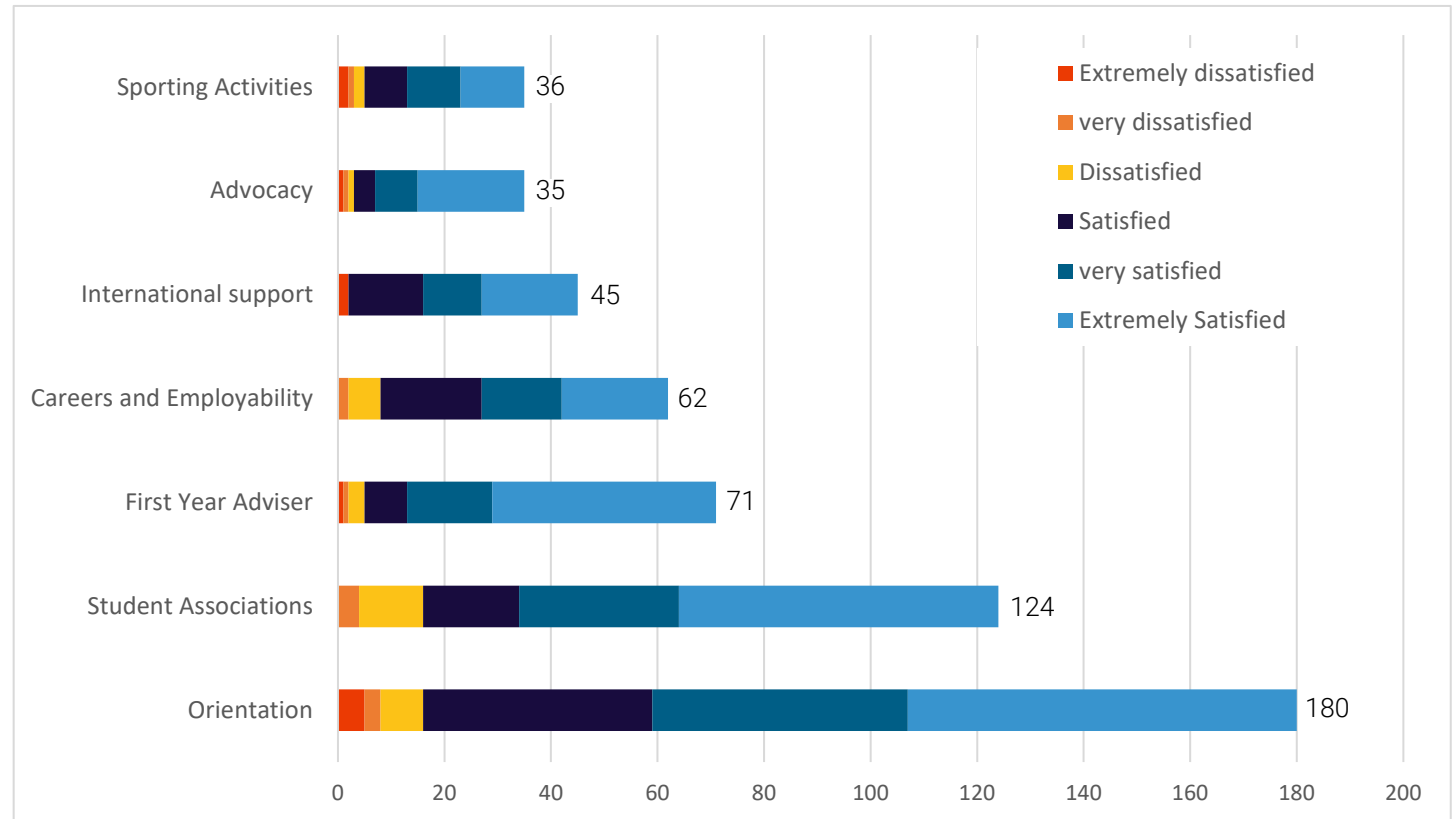**Really helpful, knowledgeable and patient person. He knew what he was talking about Reassuring person.**

Careers and Employability services
The person was great at booking an appointment and helping me craft a CV to get into my current grad program.
Advise was just common place and not unique

Figure 1 SAFF Service usage and satisfaction

Student Associations
LEXSA offers some fun weekly competitions that offer a break from study and the Child Care rebate is a huge help
used to be more support for online students

International Student Support
Staff listen well, provide strategies that can make unilife better.
did not helped.

Sporting activities
It was really fun, I did surfing..

* Total number of respondents who indicated they used the service, divided by the satisfaction rating given to that service.

SSAF Student Priority Results

The key question (Q8) in the survey was framed as follows:

Under the Higher Education Support Act 2003 the University must spend SSAF on activity that aligns with Government guidelines. Click here to see examples of what could be funded under each guideline.

In this activity please indicate the % of SSAF you choose to allocate across the allowable spending areas. (Please choose at least 5 different priority areas)

Table 2 shows the average % allocated and priority rank given to each category by the participating student cohort in this year's survey.

Figure 2 compares how the overall average % allocations have varied between 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024.

The average percentage of allocated funds and equivalent ranks across the students' course location are shown in Table 4a with table 4b comparing the Top 4 priorities at each preferred delivery location.

Table 5 shows the results for Q10 where student were asked to select the preferred delivery location in relation to the priorities they gave in Q8. They were able to select multiple locations for each category if they wished. The preferred location for delivery loosely matches course location as shown in demographic profile of respondents.

Table 2: Categories as allocated by overall student cohort in 2024

Rank	SSAF category	% Allocation	Change from 23
1	**helping students obtain employment or career advice upon graduation**	**12.6**	=
2	**helping students obtain employment while studying at SCU**	**12.0**	↑1
3	**promoting the health or welfare of students**	**10.9**	↓1
4	**providing food or drink to students on a campus**	**10.8**	=
5	**helping students with their financial affairs**	**9**	↑1
6	helping students develop skills for study	7.1	↓1
7	helping students secure accommodation	5.0	↑1
8	caring for children of students	5.0	↓1
9	supporting student clubs and groups	4.6	=
10	supporting overseas students with welfare, accommodation and employment	4.1	=
11	supporting a sporting or other recreational activity by students	3.9	↑2
12	providing libraries and reading rooms for students	2.7	↓1
13	providing legal services to students	2.6	↓1
14	advocating students' interests in relation to rules, policy and procedures	2.1	=
15	giving students information to help them in their orientation	1.9	=
16	supporting an artistic activity by students	1.7	=
17	advising students about university rules, policies and procedures	1.5	=
18	helping students obtain insurance against personal accidents	1.1	=
19	supporting the student media and content	0.9	=

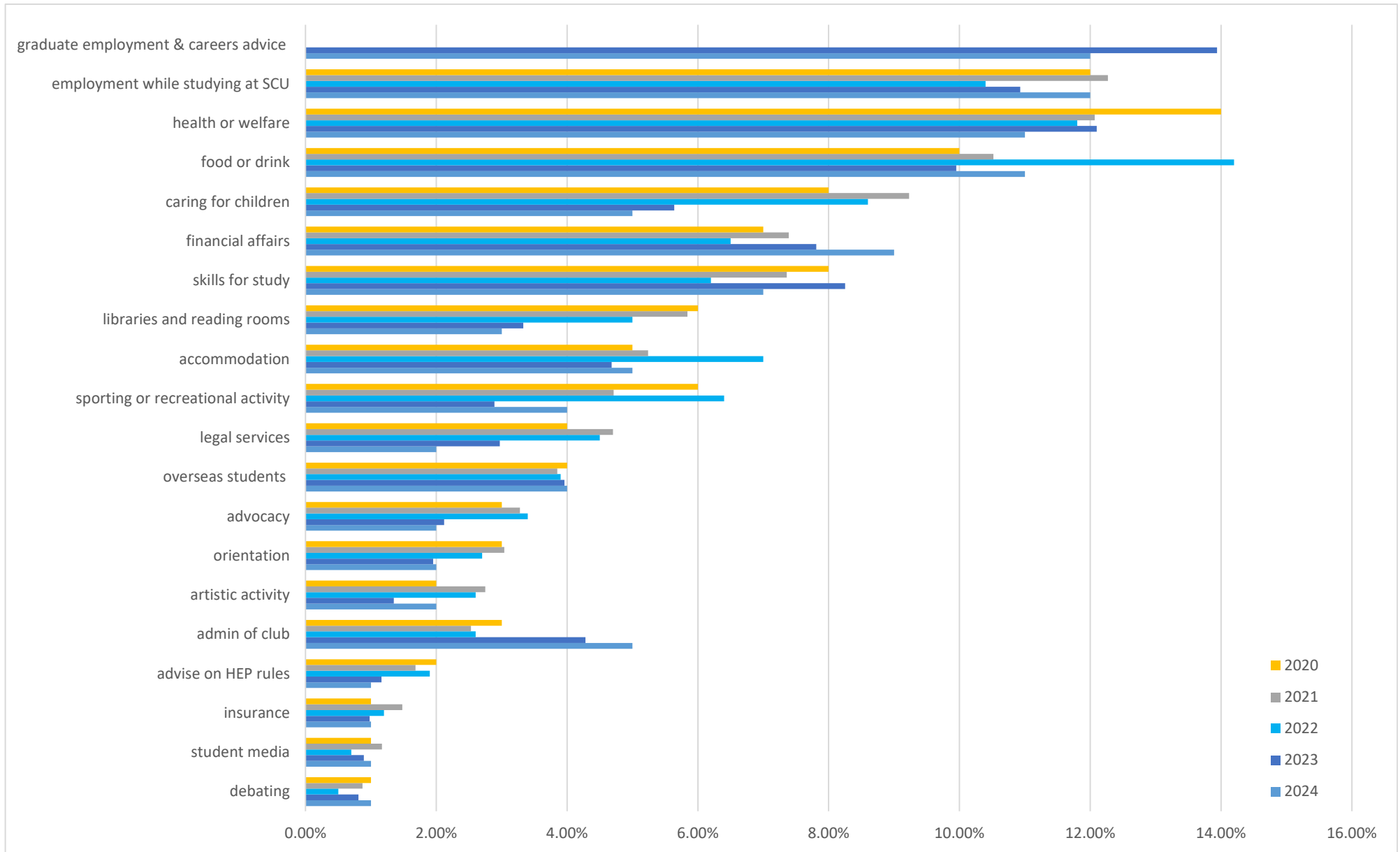**Figure 2: Overall SAFF priority allocations comparison between 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024 SSAF survey results**

Table 4a: SAFF priority allocations by cohort (course location)

overall priority rank	SSAF category	% funds allocated by location					Priority rank by location				
		CH	GC	L	O	HS	CH	GC	L	O	HS
1	**helping students obtain employment or career advice upon graduation**	12.2	13.2	8.0	12.9	13.0	3	2	4	2	2
2	**helping students obtain employment while studying at SCU**	8.9	11.6	7.0	13.6	19.5	4	3	5	1	1
3	**promoting the health or welfare of students**	13.6	9.6	11.2	12.2	2.3	1	4	2	3	12
4	**providing food or drink to students on a campus**	13.4	14.2	17.0	5.6	10.5	2	1	1	6	3
5	**helping students with their financial affairs**	7.5	9.2	10.7	8.6	10.5	6	5	3	4	3
6	helping students develop skills for study	8.3	6.0	4.6	8.5	10.2	5	6	9	5	5
7	helping students secure accommodation	3.8	5.1	4.0	5.4	3.0	10	7	12	7	10
8	caring for children of students	6.3	4.7	5.5	5.2	0.5	7	8	6	8	19
9	supporting student clubs and groups	6.2	4.2	4.1	4.8	4.0	8	10	11	9	8
10	supporting overseas students	4.4	4.2	5.4	3.7	6.0	9	9	7	10	6
11	supporting a sporting or other recreational activity	3.7	4.1	4.7	3.6	2.5	11	11	8	11	11
12	providing libraries and reading rooms for students	2.7	3.0	3.0	2.5	1.5	12	12	13	14	14
13	providing legal services to students	1.8	2.6	2.3	2.9	1.5	13	13	14	12	14
14	advocating students' interests - rules, policy and procedures	1.1	1.7	1.5	2.7	3.5	18	16	17	13	9
15	giving students information to help them in their orientation	1.4	1.9	2.2	2.1	1.0	15	14	15	15	18
16	supporting an artistic activity by students	0.9	1.8	4.4	1.3	2.0	19	15	10	17	13
17	advising about university rules, policies and procedures	1.2	0.9	1.2	2.1	5.0	17	18	18	16	7
18	helping students obtain insurance against personal accidents	1.4	0.6	0.4	1.1	1.5	14	19	20	18	14
19	supporting student media and content	1.3	0.9	1.1	0.7	1.5	16	17	19	19	14
20	supporting debating by students	0.1	0.4	1.7	0.4	0.5	20	20	16	20	19

Mean of Q8 (priority % allocated) CH: Coffs Harbour & the National Marine Science Centre GC: Gold Coast & Coomera L: Lismore

O: Online/SCU online HS: Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane Hotel Schools

Priority ranks by location which are >3 higher than the overall rank are shaded grey

Priority ranks by location which are >3 lower than the overall rank are shaded blue

Table 4b: Top 5 SAFF priority allocations compared across course locations

Priority Rank	Coffs Harbour & NMSC (CH)	Gold Coast & Coomera (GC)	Lismore (L)	Online (O)	Hotel Schools (HS)
1	promoting the health or welfare of students	providing food or drink to students on a campus	providing food or drink to students on a campus	helping students obtain employment while studying at SCU	helping students obtain employment while studying at SCU
2	providing food or drink to students on a campus	helping students obtain employment or career advice upon graduation	promoting the health or welfare of students	helping students obtain employment or career advice upon graduation	helping students obtain employment or career advice upon graduation
3	helping students obtain employment or career advice upon graduation	helping students obtain employment while studying at SCU	helping students with their financial affairs	promoting the health or welfare of students	providing food or drink to students on a campus
4	helping students obtain employment while studying at SCU	promoting the health or welfare of students	helping students obtain employment or career advice upon graduation	helping students with their financial affairs	helping students with their financial affairs
5	helping students develop study skills	helping students with their financial affairs	helping students obtain employment while studying at SCU	helping students develop study skills	helping students develop study skills

Note: responses for the following locations have been combined - Coffs Harbour & the National Marine Science Centre / Gold Coast & Coomera / the Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane Hotel Schools

Table 5: Preferred service delivery location

overall priority rank	SSAF category	GC	O	CH	L	HS-S	HS-M	HS-B	HS-HI	NMSC	C
1	**helping students obtain employment or career advice upon graduation**	132	73	59	19	6	2	1	1	2	7
2	**helping students obtain employment while studying at SCU**	123	75	52	25	6	3	4	0	2	8
3	**promoting the health or welfare of students**	123	75	63	29	2	5	0	0	1	4
4	**providing food or drink to students on a campus**	136	29	56	35	4	3	1	1	3	6
5	**helping students with their financial affairs**	100	67	44	17	5	3	1	1	0	4
6	helping students develop skills for study	95	66	44	18	4	1	1	0	1	3
7	helping students secure accommodation	70	32	38	19	1	0	1	1	1	5
8	caring for children of students	60	23	43	18	1	2	0	1	1	1
9	supporting student clubs and groups	74	32	36	19	2	1	0	0	1	4
10	supporting overseas students	59	28	36	13	3	3	2	2	0	0
11	supporting a sporting or other recreational activity	63	21	31	14	4	0	0	0	0	1
12	providing libraries and reading rooms for students	57	23	14	11	2	0	0	0	0	4
13	providing legal services to students	44	35	19	8	1	3	0	0	0	5
14	advocating students' interests - rules, policy and procedures	26	30	19	6	3	1	1	0	0	2
15	giving students information to help them in their orientation	35	26	19	8	1	1	0	0	2	2
16	supporting an artistic activity by students	35	11	12	10	3	1	0	0	0	3
17	advising about university rules, policies and procedures	19	29	17	3	1	1	0	0	0	2
18	helping students obtain insurance against personal accidents	20	15	7	4	1	2	0	0	0	1
19	supporting student media and content	15	17	8	4	1	1	0	0	1	2
20	supporting debating by students	10	7	6	6	1	0	0	0	0	0

Location Key:

GC: Gold Coast   HS-S: Hotel School Sydney   NMSC: National Marine Science Centre

O: Online/SCU online   HS-M: Hotel School Melbourne   C: Coomera

CH: Coffs Harbour   HS-B: Hotel School Brisbane
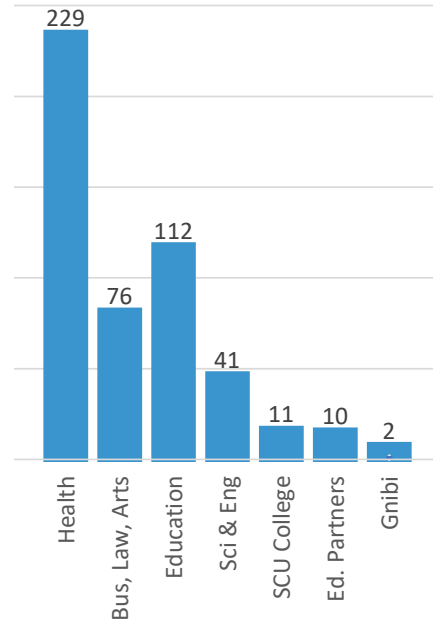
L: Lismore   HS-HI: Hotel School Haymen Island

Demographic Profile of Respondents

The full demographics of the survey responses are shown below. The survey responses are broadly representative of the student cohort with slightly higher proportional percentage of responses from - Continuing students, Gold Coast and Online students, and Faculty of Health Students.
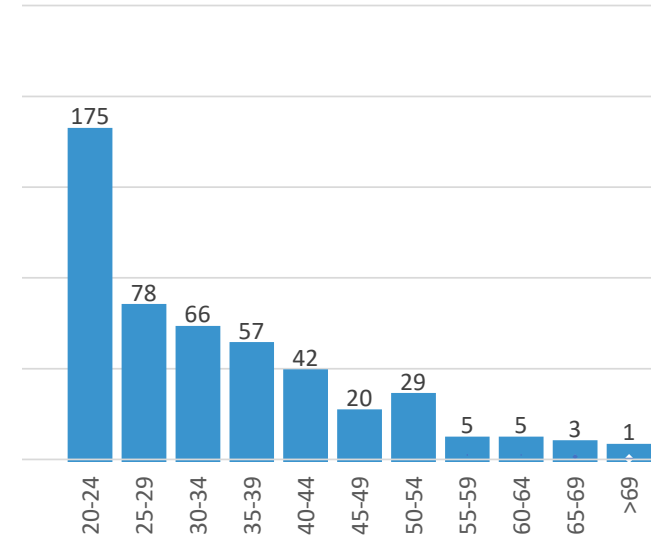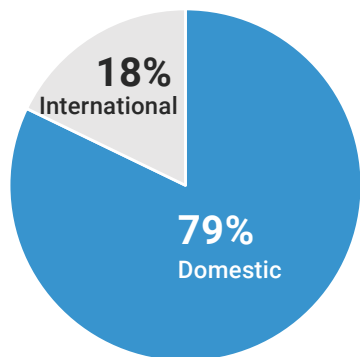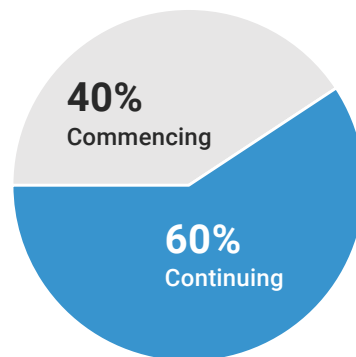
Number of respondents by location

Location	Count
Gold Coast	207
Online	190
Coffs Harbour	36
Lismore	33
NMSC	2
HS Sydney	5
HS Brisbane	3
HS Melbourne	2
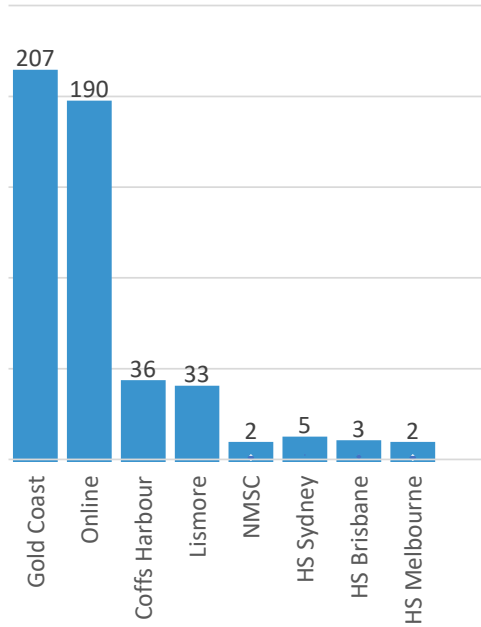
Number of respondents by faculty

Faculty	Count
Health	229
Bus, Law, Arts	76
Education	112
Sci & Eng	41
SCU College	11
Ed. Partners	10
Gnibi	2

Number of respondents by age group

Age group	Count
20-24	175
25-29	78
30-34	66
35-39	57
40-44	42
45-49	20
50-54	29
55-59	5
60-64	5
65-69	3
>69	1

Residency
- 18% International
- 79% Domestic

Cohort
- 40% Commencing
- 60% Continuing

Gender
- 26% Male
- 74% Female
- 0% Other

Course Level
- 25% postgraduate
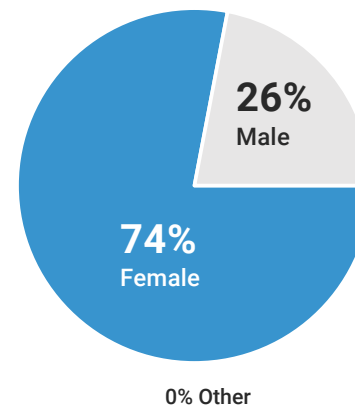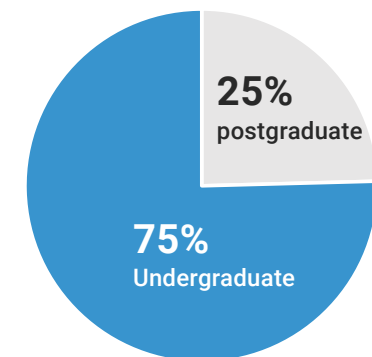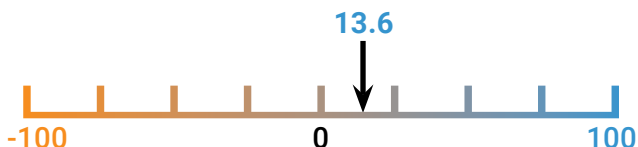- 75% Undergraduate

Summary of Qualitative Feedback

A sentiment analysis of the responses for Q11:

Please provide any suggestions or comments about the SSAF at Southern Cross University.

returned an overall positive/enthusiastic sentiment.

13.6

-100   0   100

34% positive

Positive feedback contained comments voicing appreciation for the services provided and acknowledging the hard work of all involved. Great feedback for student associations.

12% negative

Recommendations for improvement were predominantly in terms of catering to the needs of online students, lowering fees for online students, and improving communication and transparency about the allocation of funds. Issues surrounding technology were also raised.

54% neutral/suggestions

The majority of comments included encouraging suggestions or neutral comments on how to spend SSAF.

Table 5 shows the responses to Question 11:

Table 5: Suggestions and Comments about SSAF at SCU

The first year advisers are a wonderful addition to SCU and have helped me as a first year transition into university easier and feeling less alone.
The SSAF team are doing a fantasic job in supporting the SCU students.
Online support needs to be greater
Travel or more support for students when there is a natural disaster.
The student associations are the heart of the uni, so further funding would be great
STUDENT ACCOMODATION
Emails could be a bit more personable. I'm a 32 year old student and don't feel overly connected to SCU.
SSAF is a great idea and helps with students gaining support.
the most knowledge i gain about events is through the student association emails. It would be great if there was an opportunity to see events at the campus in highly visible places.
It's disheartening to get updates on events for students that could easily accomodate online students, but we're often excluded. This limits networking opportunities, a chance to make friends or opportunities afforded to other students who are fortunate to live near a campus. More online events are needed targeted to online students specifically.
It would be better if we come to know more about SSAF in the orientation
i think that currently they are doing a wonderful job of providing access to tools for students. i do think that given the current climate, the most important thing that would assist students right now is financial relief and i believe this should be priority.
Would like to see more outside activities for Coomera group. We are a bit excluded and would be good to have financial support to do smaller activities..
SSAF much improved in recent years. GC student office does a wonderful job providing activities and support, and directing people to where they can access even more specific supports

Feedback and Suggestions on Top 5 Priorities

1. Helping students obtain employment or advice on careers upon graduation

Support with mock interview and development of essential skills

Holding some lectures with some related professionals who can offer job opportuinites.

I think this is scary for a lot of young students, but the more seamless the transition from uni to carreer can be the better. I'm not sure why there aren't more summer internships or business partnerships

2. Helping students obtain employment while studying at SCU

yes, assist online study students to obtain a job would be appreciated

Uni is hard for some of the students to find work that is flexible with study, if the uni can help with this, it should partner with local businesses to do so

Connect stakeholders, employment agencies and organizations related to student's course and arrange different short term intern programs. So, students can explore work environment, required skills and additional requirements for a future job. The employers also can hire capable students for the jobs.

Have career fair with different colleges every term to help students get employment prior to their placement to help student with finance

3. Promoting the health or welfare of students

health coach, healthy meal plans, sleep advice, online naturopathic appointments by students

Hold more activities about art and animals.

having tools for students to use when feeling stress

Counselling should be available at all campuses

I learned the concept of the yarning circle from Australian Indigenous Peoples in term 1. It would be very interesting and helpful in mental health and a sense of engagement and belonging if there is a regular, weekly yarning circle on campus.

4. Providing food or drink to students on campus

Holding some activities with free food.

If there is a program which give groceries or foods for university students who are financially struggling would be helpful. Many supermarkets are donating food/ groceries which will expire in a week or 2 weeks. University can collaborate with them and purchase groceries/food and provide students who needs it.

could send online voucher to online students

Organize periodic free breakfast events, especially during exam periods.

healthier options

not compulsory. only drinking water should be fine

having just visited the Coffs campus, their student faciliites are much better stocked than those on the GC campus

5. Helping students with their financial affairs

Help budget ns understand what services are available for them

Payment plan discount understands their scenario provide extension

where to buy food cheaply, even cookbooks

By introducing free tax consultants on campus with discounted fee

Many students are doing it tough with reduced retail jobs. Paid placements, no HECS debt, accessible scholarships.

Ensuring assistance to students experiencing financial hardship, promoteworkshops to budgeting and offering emergency assistance .

I am a firm believer in educating young and older people in financial wellbeing and this should be taught to those especially not from developed nations.

Feedback and Suggestions for Student Associations

What services would you like your student associations to offer?
bigger variety of clubs and societies.
Surf lesson discounts
More activities that cater to Online Students.
As SCU students spread all over the world, I reckon student associations can have some online services or open some branches to make student associations accessible by students not lived near campus.
more spots on those activities on the weekends (trips to Springbrook...) its always full when I try to register for it
recognition and training all SCU staff of the Global Hidden Disabilities Sunflower warn by some people
On campus activities, games and events
music and food and drink in the courtyard everyday. Utilize the musicians and artists that need exposure.
Texbook discount vouchers
International connection

Appendix 1: Survey Questions

Survey Introduction

Student SSAF Survey This brief survey is your opportunity to tell the University about which services you see as the most important to receive an allocation of funding from the Student Services and Amenities FeeWhat is SSAF?. This information will be used to inform spending priorities across Southern Cross University in 2024.

 Your responses are entirely confidential. The results will be made available after the survey has been completed. No results will be reported which will identify individuals.

Questions

Q1: Are you aware of the services and activities that are funded or supported by SSAF?

☐   Yes
☐   No

If Yes continue to Q2. If No skip to Q8.

Q2: Which services have you used during the course of your study at SCU? (select all that apply)

☐   Orientation
☐   Student Associations
☐   First Year Advisers
☐   International Student Support
☐   Careers and Employability services
☐   Advocacy services
☐   Sporting Activities

Q3 How satisfied are you currently with the services and activities provided?

Slider provided for each service in Q2 0= Very disatified 5= Very Satisfied.

Q4: Please provide reasons for the satisfaction / dissatisfaction you indicated above.

Free text box for each service in Q2

Q5 Are you aware that SSAF funds your student associations and clubs?

☐   Yes
☐   No

Q6: Are you involved in any associations or clubs?

☐   Yes
☐   No

Q7: What services would you like your student associations to offer?

Free text

Q8: Under the Higher Education Support Act 2003 the University must spend SSAF on activity that aligns with Government guidelines. Click here to see examples of what could be funded under each guideline.
In this activity please indicate the % of SSAF you choose to allocate across the allowable spending areas. (Please choose at least 5 different priority areas).

Enter percentage next to each spending area category

Q9: In relation to your top priorities selected in the question above: do you have any ideas or suggestions on new ways the priorities could be delivered?

Free text box provided for each spending area category

Q10: In relation to your top priorities selected: which of the following is your preferred location to access these services?

Preferred location tick box for each spending area category. Students could select all that apply.

Q11: Please provide any suggestions or comments about the SSAF at Southern Cross University.

Free text