



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:



30 June (prior year)	Providers submit transition plan for subsequent calendar year with required information
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



La Trobe University Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF) 2026 Transition Plan*

*Whilst La Trobe submits a transition plan for 2026 (per the requirements), it will seek transition arrangements until 2027.

Introduction

1. This Transition Plan is for La Trobe University to seek approval from the Department of Education (the department) to enter into a transition arrangement [for up to three consecutive years for Table A providers, and five years for non-Table A providers], 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).

La Trobe University delivers a wide range of student services across its regional, metropolitan, and online campuses, serving over 36,000 students onshore. La Trobe is Victoria's state-wide university with a campus network that extends to six locations. The initial establishment of the Northern Study Hub at Broadmeadows and Epping in 2025, led by La Trobe, provides additional locations for increased service delivery.

The university continually reviews and adapts its services (summarised below) based on student feedback, data insights and evolving needs:

- **Centralised service delivery:** Since 2020, the majority of student services have been provided by La Trobe University to minimise administrative overheads. Student services across our campus network and online are currently delivered by several organisational units of the University including La Trobe Sport, Student Wellbeing, Student Engagement and Inclusion, La Trobe University GP Clinic, Library Study and Research Support, Employability, Student Legal and Financial Counselling Services, and Student Advising and



Support. Services delivered include, but are not limited to, sporting and recreational activities for students, supporting the administration of student clubs, promoting and supporting the health and welfare of students, and advising on matters arising under the higher education provider's rules.

- **Student-led organisations:** the University supports the La Trobe Student Association (LTSA) and the La Trobe Student Union (LTSU) and contracts each student-led organisation (SLO) to support the delivery of SSAF-funded services to students. Student engagement and support activities and student representation have been delivered by these independent and democratically elected student-led organisations for several years. The LTSA are contracted to deliver services in Victorian regional campus locations and the Melbourne CBD campus, and are being contracted to deliver Student Advocacy Services from late 2025. The LTSU is contracted to deliver services to students at the Bundoora campus.
- **Consultation and review of SSAF-funded services:** Services are regularly reviewed to ensure they remain effective and relevant to our student's needs. Service design and delivery are informed by regular student feedback, including through the annual La Trobe Student Experience Survey, which in 2025 gathered feedback from over 8,000 students, equating to 24.08% of students. La Trobe holds regular meetings and forums with our SLOs, including between student leaders and the Vice-Chancellor and Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic.
- **Other student representation and partnership:** La Trobe supports and works closely in partnership with a range of student representative groups, including student clubs and societies, that enhance diverse student representation. Support is provided for SSAF-funded student-led projects to deliver tangible benefits to improve the student experience across a range of domains.
- **La Trobe University Student Council:** The most significant recent change is the establishment of our Student Council in July 2025, comprising democratically elected student members from across the breadth of our student body, representing diversity in student voice. Led by students, the Student Council has been established as an internal structure within the University under a 'students as partners' framework to expand opportunities for student engagement in academic governance, strategy development and major projects to ensure student voice is part of decision-making. During the transition period, the Student Council will support direction of SSAF funds in 2026. Post the transition period, the Student Council will assist with allocation of the 60% of SSAF funds that the University is directly responsible for.
- **Governance challenges and audits:** The LTSU has faced governance and compliance issues in relation to SSAF-funded services the University has contracted them to deliver, leading to audits in 2024 and 2025 that identified significant non-compliance in financial and operational areas. As a result, the University has been prompted to reclaim funding, adjust service delivery and seek remediation action to be undertaken by the LTSU in 2025. The University is committed to supporting the LTSU to become compliant and meets with them regularly and on request to provide assistance.



- **Future service plans and equity focus:** Aligning with the La Trobe Education and Experience Plan, future services aim to increase flexibility and inclusivity, especially for online students, international students and students in regional locations, while expanding student voice and partnership in university governance.
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)

In 2026, La Trobe seeks approval for transition of funding and governance requirements, noting it will also seek transition arrangements in 2027 for the following reasons:

- LTSU requires additional time to address current non-compliance. Significant progress has been made, however, there are a small number of significant aspects outstanding.
- The transfer of services requires the University to follow processes that govern procurement, negotiation and contracting.
- Where services are to be discontinued by the University and staff are impacted because their roles substantially carry out those activities, the University must engage in a change process under the enterprise agreement. Care will be taken to support current La Trobe staff whose roles support SSAF funded activities through changes to employment.

In 2026, the University will be provisioning additional SSAF to SLOs to increase their service delivery, scale effectively and efficiently, and ensure their organisations can sustain appropriate governance, management and financial controls for SSAF-funded services to benefit students.

La Trobe will undertake significant work and change management in 2026 to deliver the SSAF Transition Plan and ensure full compliance by 31 December 2027 (year 3), including the following specific actions:

- finalise Student Advocacy Services transition to LTSA
 - resolve final remediation matters with LTSU
 - commence industrial change impacting staff jobs at La Trobe over two-years (e.g., redundancy and role redesign)
 - undertake major web and information changes to support students service changes
 - support major ICT changes for SLOs to undertake to establish organisational independence, with additional funding support
 - procurement of new systems to support the transition (e.g. clubs software); and
 - establishment of new SSAF/SLO reporting systems.
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).

La Trobe will manage the change required to deliver on the SSAF Transition Plan with minimal impact to students and ensuring that key services are maintained at an appropriate level.

La Trobe will embark on a significant change program within the University and with SLOs. Disruption may occur as university staff are impacted, which will be anticipated in the change planning and measures will be implemented pre-emptively to mitigate this risk in advance of changes to service provision. If disruption occurs, monitoring by La Trobe will be able to identify the issue promptly and responsive service continuity plans will be enacted.

La Trobe's transition of SSAF-funded services to SLOs will aim to be seamless and efficient, and we will draw on existing service agreements in place over recent years which will be appended as required through the transition period. However, we anticipate that disruption may occur as SLOs manage the establishment of new service delivery requirements and scale their organisations promptly and effectively to deliver continuous and quality services to students. Risk mitigations to ensure services are maintained will include robust communication and SSAF reporting requirements embedded within SLO service agreements to ensure that La Trobe is notified immediately of any emerging issues and are able to respond to ensure the University can fully comply with all legislated requirements. SLOs will continue to be supported through open and accessible engagement with the University. The University will continue to offer regular support, guidance and education to SLOs on SSAF governance requirements and any other needs they may have in response to the increased requirement to deliver services to students and manage SSAF funding. Within the 2026 SSAF funding provided to SLOs, specific funding domains will be determined in the service agreement for the SLO to ensure that sufficient SSAF funds are directed to governance, operational management, training and financial management.

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:
 - key activities to be delivered through expenditure of SSAF revenue across the provider, for both student-led organisations and other entities
 - stakeholder engagement and outcomes in determining SSAF allocation and implementing transition arrangements
 - the proposed allocations of the 40 per cent of SSAF revenue to student-led organisations on an annual basis
 - 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



- 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.**

As outlined in Table 1, La Trobe will increase the transition of SSAF funding to both LTSA and LTSU in 2026, and the Student Council will direct a portion of SSAF funding. This will be done alongside the transition work described in Section 4.

From 2027, LTSA and LTSU will receive the full 40% allocation of SSAF funding, and the Student Council will provide advice on the distribution of the remaining 60%.

Table 1 – Funding Compliance and Milestones

Funding Milestones	2025	2026	2027
Estimated SSAF revenue	\$11,910,239 [^]	\$13,283,832	\$14,384,016
Total allocation to student-led organisations#:	\$2,461,216.00 (20.66%)	\$3,246,430.00 (24.44%)	\$5,754,000 (40%)
• LTSU	\$1,089,984.00	\$1,261,652.00	\$2,373,000
• LTSA	\$1,371,232.00	\$1,984,778.00	\$3,381,000
Allocation to Student Council (2026 only)	\$0	\$1,327,629.95	\$0
Percentage of total funds directed by students	20.66%	34.43%	40.00%

[^] Estimated full-year 2025 SSAF revenue post census for semester 2, and prior to end of financial year.

#includes allocation for in-kind support for office space, IS support, equipment etc.

The University has an annual consultation process, approved by the governing body, that guides our engagement with students and SLOs around the allocation of SSAF. For 2026, functions will be delivered as outlined in the table below which include the additional change requirements that La Trobe will commence.



Table 2 - Provider of 2026 SSAF funded services at La Trobe University

Service/Function	Provider/s
Student Wellbeing (including Prevention and Inclusion)	University
Clubs and Societies	University with transition of portion of non-salary to LTSA and LTSU. University workforce changes required.
Employability	University
Financial Advice	University with setting of strategic direction by Student Council for the University to transition to a SLO. University workforce changes required.
Legal Advice	University has existing contract with external specialist provider. Setting of strategic direction by Student Council for the University to transition to a SLO via RFP – pending existing external contract arrangements.
International Student Engagement	University with additional engagement activities delivered by LTSA and LTSU via service agreements (current practice) and Student Council
Student Sport (including sporting clubs)	University
Food Relief (campus-specific)	LTSA and LTSU
Learning support services (non-academic)	University
Advising and Transition	University
Advocacy	LTSA
Student Engagement	University with additional engagement activities delivered by LTSA and LTSU via service agreements (current practice) and Student Council. University workforce changes required for increased transition to SLOs.
Student Representation	LTSA, LTSU and Student Council
Student Partnerships	University and Student Council
GP Clinic	University (SSAF contribution, not provision of full service)



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

- 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
- progress against any previous milestones or commitments in previous annual plans submitted to the department.

Governance requirement

The transition plan governance milestones and requirements for each SLO is detailed below:

Table 3 - LTSA Transition Plan Governance Milestones

Transition Plan Governance Milestones	Year 2025	Year 2026	Year 2027
Majority student-led	Completed	n/a	n/a
Democratically elected leaders	Completed	n/a	n/a
Governing body of the organisation makes decisions independently from the higher education provider	Completed	n/a	n/a
Keeping and publication of annual audited accounts	Completed	n/a	n/a
Policies and procedures for record keeping, risk management, fraud prevention and financial controls	Completed	n/a note: University to conduct compliance review	n/a



Table 4 - LTSU Transition Plan Governance Milestones

Transition Plan Governance Milestones	Year 2025	Year 2026	Year 2027
Majority student-led	Completed	n/a	n/a
Democratically elected leaders	Completed	n/a	n/a
Governing body of the organisation makes decisions independently from the higher education provider	Completed	n/a	n/a
Keeping and publication of annual audited accounts	Incomplete*	n/a*	n/a*
Policies and procedures for record keeping, risk management, fraud prevention and financial controls	The University is continuing to support the LTSU to remediate compliance matters and LTSU adherence to their policies. Further information from LTSU to finalise these matters is pending **	n/a**	n/a**

*The University continues to support the LTSU to appropriately manage the SSAF allocated to the SLO. The LTSU remains independent of the University, and we continue to support them to remediate the issues identified in recent auditing.

**The University has commissioned an external assurance organisation to undertake an audit of the LTSU accounts, their compliance with funding agreements for the provision of SSAF, and internal adherence to their own policies and internal financial controls, following potential financial mismanagement and non-adherence to LTSU policies and their funding agreement. The University continues to support the LTSU to enable them to adhere to their existing policy suite and the terms of the funding agreement but notes that the LTSU is an independent entity, and this remains a governance and management function of the LTSU Council and employees. Within the past 12 months, the University has temporarily removed SSAF and the longer-term provision of the Student Advocacy function from the LTSU to ensure alignment with relevant legislation and services to students.



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:

Full name	Professor Sue Bennett
Position title	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)
Email address	oodvca@latrobe.edu.au
Phone number(s)	s 47F _____

Transition Plan Owner

I, Professor Theo Farrell, Vice-Chancellor and President of La Trobe University, 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	s 47F _____
Full name of Owner	Professor Theo Farrell
Position title of Owner	Vice-Chancellor and President
Date Approved	17 December 2025

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

