

# Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF)

## What is SSAF?

Nearly all tertiary education students in Australia pay SSAF. The fee was introduced by the Australian Parliament in 2011 through the Higher Education Legislation Amendment (Student Services and Amenities) Act 2011.

SSAF is intended to support non-academic services and activities that make a meaningful difference to your experience during your studies.

## I paid SSAF; what happens with my money?

The legislation limits SSAF spending to certain types of services and activities. These can include:

- social activities
- sports
- advocacy services
- legal help
- migration advice
- student representation
- food and drink services
- employment and career advice
- childcare
- creative activities

## SSAF ensures that you have students representing you

Institutions like the University of Sydney have democratically elected student representative organisations that represent students' interests, and give support and independent advice to students. These organisations – such as SUPRA and the SRC – are funded through SSAF.

SUPRA has fought hard to ensure that postgraduate students are represented at the University of Sydney. We have fought to be included in decision-making processes, and now have places on many boards and committees that direct the University's policies. We also campaign, protest, and write letters to the University executive to push for students' interests.

## SSAF gives you access to services

SUPRA provides free professional services (legal, migration and casework) for all postgrads that need assistance. Around 3000 students access our professional services each year. Our casework and legal teams help students with many issues, such as:

- problems with tenancy/landlords
- Show Good Cause notices
- intellectual property law
- academic dishonesty allegations

- academic appeals
- family law
- migration law
- enrolment
- problems with supervisors
- car/bicycle accidents
- employment law
- domestic violence

SUPRA is funded exclusively by SSAF. How is that money used?

### **Student elections for your representatives**

Every year you get the opportunity to make your voice heard, by voting or even running in SUPRA elections. 12 of SUPRA's 33 elected councillors receive a stipend that enables them to prioritise work for SUPRA, such as: lobbying the University or government on your behalf; organising forums for postgrads; organising social events like Wine & Cheese, SUPRA Sports, and Free Lunch & Advice; and operating our social media pages to keep you informed.

These student councillors represent you to the University and the public. They advocate on your behalf to ensure your rights are protected and that students are at the centre of decision making at the University. They also lobby the government and other stakeholders; for example, Co-President Minran Liu recently met with a representative from the NSW state government to push for greater support for international students during the COVID-19 pandemic.

If you would like your student leaders to advocate for you on a systemic matter, you can email them, or attend a SUPRA Council meeting to discuss issues affecting postgraduate students.

**SUPRA employs staff to support you.** We provide one-on-one independent support when you need it. Our Student Advice and Advocacy Officers (SAAOs) can assist with all sorts of university-related problems; our Legal Service can advise on most legal matters – from intellectual property to family law.

**SUPRA holds social events throughout the year,** such as Wine & Cheese, SUPRA Sports, and Free Lunch & Advice. While the University campuses are closed, we continue to hold events online and keep you up-to-date with issues that affect you.

**SUPRA keeps you informed and connected.** We have up-to-date information on our website; a regular newsletter, eGrad, to keep you informed about important news and events; and social media pages like WeChat, Facebook and Instagram.

I've never used SUPRA's services or attended any of your events; why do I have to pay SSAF?

Your SSAF money is spread across a range of student organisations and services. You could be accessing services that are financed by SSAF money without even realising it.

Every student at the University benefits from the collective resources provided by SSAF, even if you never need to use a service. For example, SUPRA represented students to ensure that late submission penalties were standardised across faculties. Some students were being penalised at a rate of 20% per day for a late submission – due to SUPRA’s advocacy, this was brought down to 5% per day, making it consistent across the University. Have you ever needed a simple extension? SUPRA fought for and won the introduction of simple extensions.

In response to the COVID 19 crisis SUPRA has continued to advocate for student needs. Our successes include:

- fee reductions for some courses that moved online as a result of COVID-19
- 5-week student accommodation relief at the start of semester 1 this year
- research period for HDR students extended

You also benefit from organisations like SUPRA by knowing that you have a safety net, should you ever need support, and you help ensure your peers have support when they need it. For example, you may never need legal assistance from SUPRA, but one of your friends might be confidentially accessing our services for support to escape family violence. As a student community, we ensure that this safety net is there for everyone.

## How was SSAF shared between services and organisations in 2019?

University of Sydney Union (USU)	\$5,138,247
Sydney University Sport & Fitness (SUSF)	\$4,942,431
Students' Representative Council (SRC)	\$2,060,223
Capital Sinking Fund	\$2,000,000
<b>Sydney University Postgraduate Representative Association (SUPRA)</b>	<b>\$1,868,635</b>
Cumberland Student Guild (CSG)	\$817,401
Student Support Services	\$415,710
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$17,242,647</b>

## This semester I’m not studying on campus. Why do I still have to pay SSAF?

Many of the services and provisions that are made possible because of SSAF are still operating, if a bit differently. For example, SUPRA is still working for you to full capacity every day through student representation and our professional services, even though our office isn’t open.

Other organisations that provide services like food and drinks, and sports and recreation, are also still operating. It can be harder to see the immediate value of SSAF when you're not on campus to access the services in person, but it's very important that these organisations are funded so they can be there for you today, and into the future.

For further information, and to find out about SSAF exemptions:

- [the University website](#) has helpful information
- [the Department of Education, Skills and Employment](#) answers many frequently asked questions.