University of Southern Queensland



SSAF Student Survey

2026 Results | Students and Education Portfolio

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Executive Summary

In accordance with the *Student Services, Amenities, Representation, and Advocacy Guidelines*, the University is committed to consulting with students, including their democratically elected representatives, regarding the purpose and allocation of Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF) funding.

SSAF supports a range of non-academic services designed to enhance students' educational, social, and cultural experiences, whether they study on-campus or online. These services include orientation programs, wellbeing initiatives, career development, advocacy, and recreational activities.

The 2026 SSAF Survey was conducted from Monday 7 September to Sunday 4 October, inviting all current students to share their feedback. A total of 354 total responses were recorded. The survey aimed to identify priority areas for investment and captured both quantitative and qualitative data. The results highlight the diverse needs and preferences of our student community, reflecting key themes that underscore their priorities for online and on-campus services.

These insights will inform the allocation of SSAF funding for 2027, ensuring that initiatives remain aligned with student expectations and requirements. Ongoing consultation with the Student Senate will continue throughout 2027 to guide this process.

2026 Survey Details

Survey period

The survey was open from 7 September to 4 October 2026.

Survey participants

The survey was sent to 19,371 students who were active in a UniSQ program at the time of sending. A total of 7,492 students (39%) opened the email. A reminder email was sent midway through the survey opening period and had a 40% open rate.

Survey methodology

The survey was developed in consultation with the UniSQ Student Senate and the UniSQ Student Guild. The survey design was similar to 2025 though, in 2026, included the collection of demographic information. The survey asked students to select their top 10 priority services from the 19 categories outlined in subsection 19-38(4) of the *Higher Education Support Act 2003 (HESA)* (see Appendix 1). To support their selection, students could provide further information via a free text field, offering more context for their choice.

Students were also asked to describe an activity or service that would make the biggest difference to the UniSQ student experience.

Survey participation was incentivised with the opportunity to go into a draw to receive a gift card or Oodie from the UniSQ Student Guild.

Survey promotion

To maximise participation, the survey was promoted through multiple channels during the survey period:

- Email invitations to all current students.
- Advertising on campus TV screens in common areas.
- Announcements on the UniSQ UConnect webpage.
- Inclusion in the Student monthly newsletter.
- Posts in the UniSQ Current Student Facebook group.

Survey results

Response rates

A total of 354 survey responses were received during the survey period (compared to 752 in 2025). Despite the survey deployment window occurring at the same time of the study period as 2025, utilising a similar communications strategy, and including incentives for participation, the much lower response rates in 2026 may have been impacted by a number of other surveys, including the National Student Safety Survey, in field at the same time.

Student respondents

Following consultation with the Student Senate and UniSQ Student Guild, demographic questions were included in the 2026 SSAF survey to determine whether priorities differed amongst cohorts, genders, campus location or other characteristics. Results of the survey showed that student priorities are consistent across cohorts with employability, wellbeing, study support and financial assistance identified as universal needs. Where there were differences, for example, a strong demand for food and drink by students who were largely based on campus, and for childcare for students over the age of 25, these are largely self-evident given the characteristics of each group.

The demographic profile of the respondents closely mirrored that of the broader UniSQ student population. The full SSAF survey respondent profile is included in Appendix 1.

	SSAF Survey Respondents	UniSQ Student Population
Female	55.9%	58.5%
Under 25	37%	38.7%
Domestic	87.3%	89.3%
Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	4%	4.85%
Study mode entirely or mostly online	59.8%	61.39%

Services and amenities ratings

The below table summarises student responses across the 19 allowable SSAF expenditure categories, in order from highest to lowest priority for 2027. The table also shows the change in priorities from the 2025 survey with the top three priorities remaining consistent year on year.

Services and Amenities	Total votes 2026	Change from 2025
1. Helping students obtain employment or advice on careers	198 (55.93%)	No change
2. Promoting the health or welfare of students	183 (51.69%)	No change
3. Helping students develop skills for study, by means other than undertaking courses of study in which they are enrolled	177 (50%)	No change
4. Helping students with their financial affairs	170 (48.02%)	↑ 1 place

5. Providing food or drink to students on campus	149 (42.09%)	↓ 1 place
6. Helping students secure accommodation	145 (40.96%)	↑ 4 places
7. Providing libraries and reading rooms (other than those provided for academic purposes) for students	139 (39.26%)	↓ 1 place
8. Advocating students' interests in matters arising under the University's rules	134 (37.85%)	↑ 1 place
9. Providing legal services to students	133 (37.57%)	↓ 1 place
10. Giving students information to help them in their orientation	116 (32.76%)	↓ 3 places
11. Caring for children of students	100 (28.24%)	No change
12. Advising on matters arising under the University's rules	97 (27.4%)	↑ 1 place
13. Supporting a sporting or other recreational activity by students	92 (25.99%)	↓ 1 place
14. Supporting the administration of a club most of whose members are students	79 (22.32%)	↑ 1 place
15. Helping meet the specific needs of overseas students relating to their welfare, accommodation and employment	64 (18.08%)	↓ 1 place
16. Supporting an artistic activity by students	62 (17.51%)	No change
17. Helping students obtain insurance against personal accidents	55 (15.54%)	No change
18. Supporting the production and dissemination to students of media whose content is provided by students	41 (11.58%)	No change
19. Supporting debating by students	25 (7.06%)	No change

Themed open-ended questions

To enhance UniSQ students' educational, social, and cultural experiences, and to better understand the necessary services for both online and on-campus students, respondents were given the opportunity to provide additional context regarding their votes or to share what matters most to them with the University.

Students' open-text responses point to six (6) overarching priorities:

1. **Cost of living support** that relieves financial, food, accommodation, childcare, placement and travel pressures.
2. **Strengthen employment and industry pathways**, including networking opportunities, mentoring and employer engagement.
3. Provide equivalent value for **online and regional students**, with digital, after hours, and geographically accessible services.
4. **Invest in wellbeing** as an enabler of success, including counselling, health promotion, physical activity and safety support.

5. **Build sustained communities**, at orientation, through clubs, discipline networks, social activities and inclusive campus and online spaces.
6. **Make SSAF impact visible**, with clear communication about expenditure, eligibility, reach and outcomes for different student cohorts.

Indicative student quotes that speak to key themes are included below:

1. Cost of living pressure

- General cost of living
  - "Some of the biggest barriers to completing study are economical. It would be good to see students supported in this way."
  - "It's tough studying full time with money… the $250 bursary that's available simply isn't enough for the week."
  - "I would want to see more financial aid and or scholarship even for $1000 or less."
- Impact of placement
  - "Paid placement assistance. Flexible placement options. Paid work integration."
  - "Assistance with the costs associated with becoming a nursing student such as needing to pay for my TB test or transport to placement."
  - "I have to take unpaid 4 weeks off for placement that's mandatory."
  - "Support for placement-related accommodation, travel and living costs."
- Childcare and support for students with caring responsibilities
  - "Studying while being a parent is very hard and child care costs are high, particularly when you only need them in care for a 2 hour class."
  - "Short time child care options to help with assignments, attend classes or while on placement."
  - "Child minding would have meant in person study was more viable for me."
- Food insecurity and affordability
  - "Providing food vouchers or assistance with food costs."
  - "Food and groceries support for students doing it tough."
  - "Springfield students don't have a variety of affordable food options."
  - "More free healthy food."
  - "More options for food at the Ipswich campus instead of one cafe with high prices."
- Accommodation and travel
  - "Accommodation assistance for students who need to travel for residential schools."
  - "Assistance for regional students who need to travel to campus."
  - "Support for students who are required to relocate temporarily for placement."

2. Employment and industry pathways

- Employment and career outcomes
  - "Helping students with finding employment, meaningful career employment, not just a job."
  - "Career/industry sessions that give students 'the foot in the door' or contacts or skills to be a standout job applicant."
  - "More career support and help finding work experience related to my engineering studies."
  - "More assistance preparing students for work after graduation."
- Industry connections and networking

    - "Opportunities to meet employers and industry representatives while studying."
    - "Networking events with professionals working in our chosen fields."
    - "Access to mentors and industry contacts."
- Internships and placements
    - "Having the ability to gain experience in the field of study beyond merely the arranged placements."
    - "More opportunities for students to gain practical workplace experience."
    - "Paid work opportunities relevant to our degree."
- Graduate programs and overseas opportunities
    - "Information day on campus for nursing students about any programs/graduate programs by QLD Health/Darling Downs Health."
    - "Graduate program information and support."
    - "Possibly would have been the ability to go overseas and participate in a site based opportunity there, or have connections to the British Bar (eg Lincoln's Inn) or the New York Bar etc for overseas global opportunities instead of Australian PLT/articles with a valid law degree."

3. Students who are online and geographically isolated

- Facilitated connection
    - "Maintaining and advocating for online spaces for students to interact and find support."
    - "Opportunities for online students to network and engage with each other."
    - "An online hub for arts students to take out the isolation that often accompanies distance learning."
- Accessible support and services
    - "More online career and networking opportunities specifically designed for students studying remotely."
    - "Having some sort of outside of hours help, as most of my time spent studying is outside my own work hours."
    - "Virtual services that can be accessed regardless of location."

4. Physical and mental wellbeing

- Mental health and counselling
    - "Mental health support is one of the most important services a university can provide."
    - "Access to counselling services is extremely important."
    - "Anything mental health related. Also more funding to the student support services that provide counselling!"
    - "Supporting students to look after their health and wellbeing helps the students personally, which would have flow on effects to their study and performance."
- Physical health
    - "Physical wellbeing initiatives would make a difference."
    - "Programs promoting healthy lifestyles and physical activity."
    - "Access to sporting and recreation opportunities."

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5. Build communities

- Beyond Orientation
  - “Orientation is great, but more needs to happen throughout the year.”
  - “More regular activities after Orientation Week.”
  - “Support ongoing engagement, not just activities at the start of study.”
  - “Movie nights, games and social events.”
  - “Arts, culture and recreational activities.”
- Clubs and societies
  - “Interest-based clubs and communities.”
  - “More opportunities to engage socially through shared interests.”
  - “Support for student-led activities and groups.”
  - “More opportunities for students to come together around common interests.”
- Discipline and program-based networks
  - “More opportunities to connect with students studying the same degree.”
  - “Discipline-specific communities would be beneficial.”
  - “Networking opportunities within programs.”

6. Make SSAF Visible

- “None of these serve online students in an impactful way.”
- “The majority of these things don't apply to me as I am fully online.”
- “I don't use enough of the services as I'm overseas and online study.”
- “I don't believe in having to pay for stuff I'm not using at University, considering I'm online.”
- “Many of these I would not select but needed to pick ten.”
- “I could not find ten items worthy of my SSAF.”
- “Transparent funding and expenses would greatly increase my interest in remaining involved with the University and their outcomes.”

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Next steps

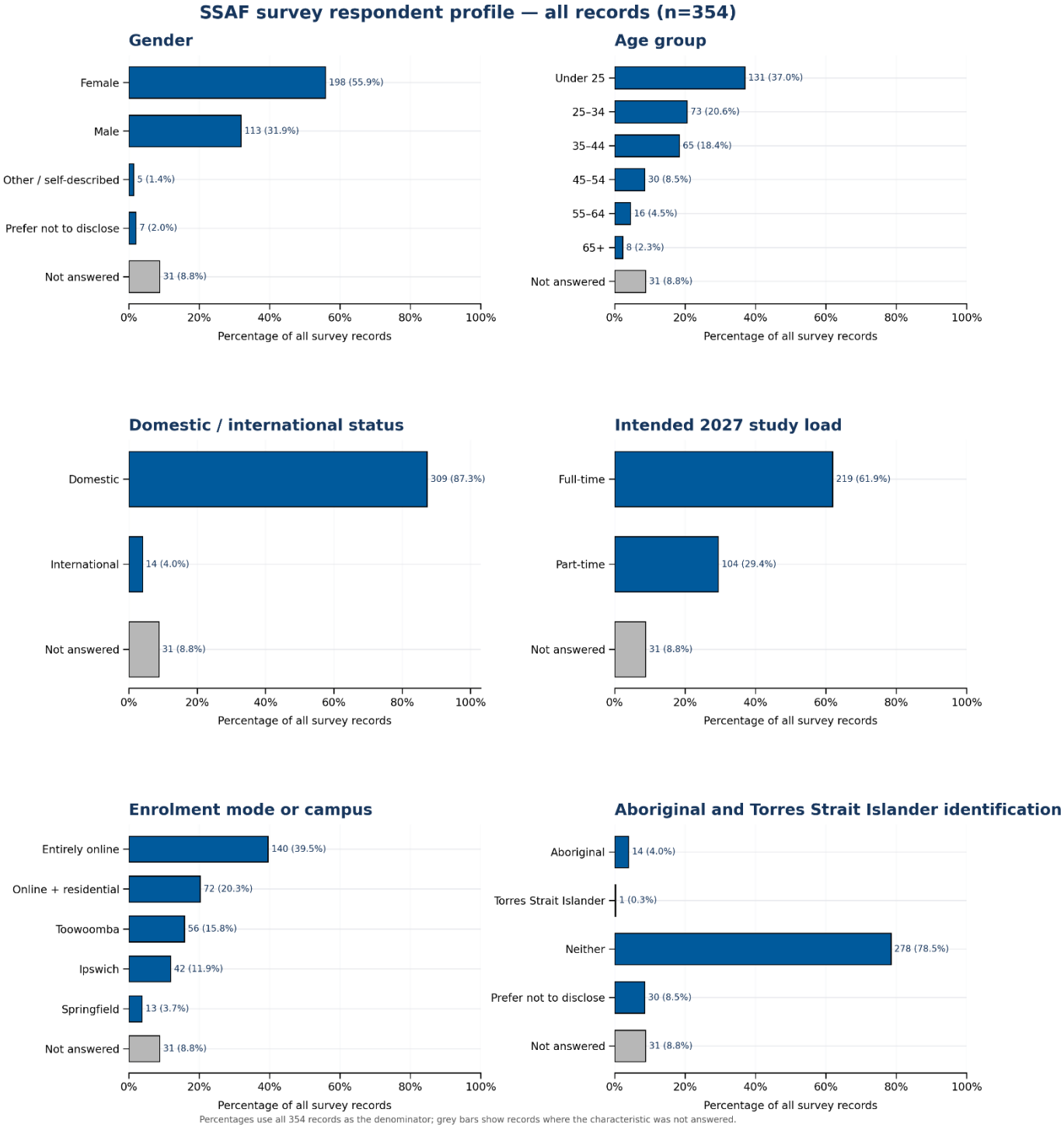
The results of the 2026 SSAF Student Survey will be shared with the Student Senate, UniSQ Student Guild and relevant University executives to inform decisions on future SSAF funding allocations.

Ongoing consultation with the Student Senate and the UniSQ Student Guild will continue to ensure student priorities remain central to funding decisions. A detailed review of the 2026 allocations will be presented to the Senate by mid-2027.

UniSQ continues to strengthen its governance and compliance relative to SSAF. The UniSQ Guild is also conducting independent consultation with students to support its decision-making and allocations.

For additional information on SSAF, including a breakdown of past funding allocations, please visit the Student Services and Amenities Fee website.

Appendix 1 – SSAF Respondent Profile



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