



**Tertiary
Education
Commission**
Te Amorangi
Mātauranga Matua



Student Services Fees

**Guidance for tertiary education
providers**

Updated October 2022

Changes to the way student services fees¹ are regulated take effect from 1 January 2023.

This document provides an update on the changes and explains the student services fee, including:

- › **information** on how to comply with regulations;
- › examples of good practice; and
- › an [example](#) of what to include in a student services fee report.

What is a student services fee?

Tertiary education organisations (TEOs) can charge their students² a student services fee to fund the delivery of services that support students and enhance their academic experience.

How are student services fees regulated?

From 1 January 2023, student services fees become regulated through funding determinations. This change sees existing student services fee regulations, previously regulated through a Ministerial Direction, become subject to funding conditions administered by the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC). These funding conditions outline the rules that providers must follow when receiving funding from the TEC.

The funding conditions that relate to student services fees ensure that providers are transparent when setting these fees and are accountable to students for their use. The funding conditions provide a clear framework for providers and students to work together to set the fee and ensure access to services that students need.

Areas of compliance

Providers that charge a student services fee to help fund the costs of delivering [student services](#) must comply with all aspects of the funding conditions.

The funding conditions relating to student services fees cover six areas of compliance:

- › [which students can be charged a compulsory fee for student services](#)
- › [student involvement in decision-making](#)
- › [what services the fee can fund](#)
- › [accounting for the use of student services fees](#)
- › [annual student services fee reporting](#)
- › [publishing student services fee information](#)

¹ Previously Compulsory Student Services Fees (CSSFs). Student services fees are also referred to as 'the fee' throughout this guide.

² For the sake of this guide, the definition of 'student' includes work-based learners.

Which students can be charged a compulsory fee for student services?

While most students can be charged a compulsory fee for student services, a new condition that comes into force from 1 January 2023 means that apprentices and trainees cannot be charged a compulsory fee. Instead, you must give these students the ability to opt in to paying for and accessing student services. An apprentice or trainee can only be charged a student services fee if they agree to it.

You can also give apprentices and trainees the option of paying for specific student services that they would like to access

The different requirements for apprentices and trainees reflect that they are likely to spend less time on campus, and therefore may have limited access to the services funded by a student services fee."

Student involvement in decision-making

Students or their representatives must be involved in making decisions about many aspects of the student services fee. The funding conditions require providers to either consult or make decisions jointly with their students, or student representatives, to determine:

- › the maximum fee that students will pay (this includes the amount charged to different types of students, for example, work-based, international, part-time or distance students)
- › the types of services that will be delivered within the specified categories (see [categories of student services](#))
- › the procurement and method for authorising expenditure on these services.

We recommend you review the decision-making processes you have in place to ensure students are sufficiently involved and that you are complying with the funding conditions.

There are certain expectations to ensure adequate arrangements for student involvement. Providers must:

- › keep an open mind and not have predetermined a course of action before involving students in decision-making
- › supply and publicise enough information to adequately inform students or their representatives so that they can respond to proposals
- › ensure that there is sufficient time for students to consider proposals and to provide feedback

- › listen to what students have to say and give due consideration to alternative proposals.

Engaging students: examples of good processes

- › Ask your students (and their representatives) how they would like to be involved in decisions about student services fees - eg. by being consulted or being part of the decision-making process.
- › Establish committees with student representation and advisory or decision-making powers over how student services fees are set, what services should be delivered, and how these services should be purchased.
- › Share information with students about how the fee is being used and how the services are performing.
- › Seek regular feedback from students to inform any proposed changes, including surveys on the quality of services offered and what other types of service students may value.
- › Publish information on your website that clearly sets out any relevant changes to student services fee that you must consult or decide jointly with students on, giving students sufficient time to engage with and provide feedback on proposals.
- › Provide students a summary of the feedback received through student involvement and an explanation of how that feedback was taken into consideration.
- › Hold student forums, where students or their representatives are invited to provide feedback on student services fees.
- › Form partnerships with student groups to deliver certain student services.
- › Engage with all types of students who could be charged a student services fee, including international students and work-based learners.



Fee setting: examples of good processes

- › Setting a different fee rate for different sites to reflect the services students can access. For instance, if you have multiple campuses that offer different services.
- › Setting a different fee for different students. For instance, distance students or work-based learners who cannot access all the services offered may be charged a lower fee.
- › Granting refunds if a student withdraws from their studies (a pro-rata refund for the period of their enrolment, or aligned with your withdrawal and refund policy³) and publishing your refund policy so students are informed.

³ PTEs charging a student services fee have responsibilities around withdrawals and refunds under the Education and Training Act 2020 (section 357). For more information on the refund requirements, please visit NZQA's website: <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/approval-accreditation-and-registration/student-fee-protection/student-withdrawals-refunds/>

Categories of student services

Currently delivery of the following service categories can be supported by the student services fee:

Advocacy and legal advice

Advocating on behalf of individual students and groups of students and providing independent support to resolve problems. This includes advocacy and legal advice relating to accommodation.

Careers information, advice and guidance

Supporting students' transition into post-study employment.

Counselling services

Providing non-academic counselling and pastoral care, such as chaplains.

Employment information

Providing information about employment opportunities for students while they are studying.

Financial support and advice

Providing hardship assistance and advice to students on financial issues.

Health services

Providing health care and related welfare services.

Media

Supporting the production and dissemination of information by students to students, including newspapers, radio, television and internet-based media.

Childcare services

Providing affordable childcare services while parents are studying.

Clubs and societies

Supporting student clubs and societies, including through the provision of administrative support and facilities for clubs and societies.

Sports, recreation and cultural activities

Providing sports, recreation and cultural activities for students.

If you offer these services without charging students for them, you do not need to comply with the conditions on student services fees. If you charge students for any of these services, you must comply with the conditions, regardless of what the fee is called. If you are unsure whether a type of student service falls within one of the specified categories, please contact us by email at ssf@tec.govt.nz.

Account for how the fees are spent

Providers must either hold student services fee income in a separate bank account, or ensure that all associated income and expenditure is separately accounted for in their accounting system. This includes separately accounting for depreciation of spaces assigned to student services fees.

This ensures that student services fee income is only spent as intended on permitted student services. It will also help you to easily meet the reporting requirements set out below.



Report on how the fees are spent

Institutions must report on student services fees in their annual reports.

PTEs must provide a written report to their students and the Tertiary Education Commission (ssf@tec.govt.nz) each year.

The report must:

- › identify the fee charged per equivalent full-time student (EFTS) - this includes the amount charged for each type of student (for example, work-based learners, international students, distance students, part-time students, or students at different campuses)
- › describe each type of student service that the fee supports – note that the ‘types’ of student services are distinct from the ‘categories’ of student services (for example, ‘social sports’ are a type of service that falls within the ‘sports, recreation and cultural activities’ category)
- › include a statement of the student services fee income and expenditure for each type of student service (see [table](#) in appendix)
- › demonstrate how you are complying with the accounting requirements.

We’ve provided an [example of what to include in a student services fee report](#) that can be used as a template.

Student services fee information available on provider websites

In addition to written reports, providers must also make certain student services fee information available on their websites to ensure that students are informed of their rights and how they can participate in related decision-making. This increases the transparency of student services fee processes and student involvement.

The following information must be displayed prominently on a provider's website, in an accessible section specific to student services fees:

- › the fee charged per EFTS for each campus and each type of student, if different fees are charged (for example, if there is a reduced fee charged for distance students, or for a campus that has different services available)
- › a description of the student services that the fee supports (i.e., each type of service that the fee supports and not just the categories of student services offered)
- › a description of the arrangements that the provider has established for decisions to be made jointly or in consultation with students or their representatives on matters related to the current year's student services fee, including a response to any feedback received from students, how the provider consulted or jointly made decisions with students, and what was decided
- › a description of how students can engage in and contribute to student services fee decisions for future years
- › how providers propose to consult or jointly make decisions with their students and the issues to be considered.

This content should be updated as and when any changes related to student services fees occur. Most providers make changes to these fees annually and so run a mid-year process to involve students in related decisions.

Good practice reporting is clear and transparent and might also include:

- › Links to the different services the student services fee helps fund, so students can easily access these
- › Information on exemptions to the fee, pro-rata rates available, refunds, or rebates
- › Student services fee policy documents
- › Consultation documents, student survey information, or feedback received on the student services fee
- › Feedback forums for student services and your practices related to the student services fee
- › Contact details for student services fee queries
- › Key dates and information for upcoming student meetings or consultation opportunities

Non-compliance with funding conditions

The compliance requirements for institutions charging student services fees are set out in TEC's funding conditions. The TEC can request information from TEOs to assist in determining whether conditions are being complied with, and can also undertake audits or investigations to assure itself of TEO compliance.

If TEC determines a breach of funding conditions has occurred, it has the ability to exercise a number of powers, including suspending, revoking or withdrawing funding.

Contact us

For information and advice on student services fee requirements, please contact: ssf@tec.govt.nz

Appendix: What to include in a student services fee report

- › **What is a Student Services Fee?** Describe what a student services fee is and why your organisation charges this.
- › **How much is the student services fee?** Identify the fee charged per equivalent full-time student (EFTS) and, if offered, pro-rata rates for part-time, distance and work-based students. If you have multiple campuses, you need to specify the fee charges for each different campus. If you charge a different fee for international students, this should also be specified.
- › **Description of student services.** Provide a description of the actual services the fee funds under the category of services headings (i.e., sub-categories, not just repeating the generic descriptors from the funding determination).
- › **Reporting income and expenditure.** Provide a breakdown of the fee income and expenditure for each type of student service. The table below provides an example of how you could report this. It must be broken down by service type, not just the specified student services fee category.
- › **How are you complying with the accounting requirements?** Comment on the student services fee accounting practices: related income must either be held in a separate account or ring-fenced within your organisation's existing accounts. This includes depreciation for spaces occupied and charged under the fee.
- › **Student involvement in student services fee decision-making.** While not a requirement in the annual report for Institutions or a PTE's report for students, including information about how student services fee decisions are made and how students can be involved increases transparency and encourages participation. Good practice would:
 - provide a contact for related queries
 - specify how students were involved in decisions related to the current student services fee – including setting the fee amount, determining the services offered, procuring those services and how expenditure is authorised
 - indicate how students can provide feedback on the services offered and how they can be involved in future decisions.



Student services fee income and expenditure must be reported by each type of student service, for example:

Service category <i>List the categories of service your provider offers</i>	Type of service <i>The specific types of service funded within each category for example</i>	Revenue			Expenditure	Surplus / (Deficit)
		Student services fee income	Other revenue	Total Revenue	Student services fee expenditure	
Advocacy and legal advice	E.g., Class representative network					
	E.g., Tenancy advice service					
Careers information, advice and guidance	E.g., CV assistance					
	E.g., Interview practice, career guides					
Counselling services	E.g., Chaplaincy					
	E.g., Wellbeing workshops					
Employment information	E.g., Career expos					
	E.g., Online job portal					
Financial support and advice	E.g., Budgeting services					
	E.g., Savings workshops					
Health services	E.g., Subsidised GP clinic					
	E.g., Crisis support service					
Media	E.g., Student radio					
	E.g., Student magazine					
Childcare services	E.g., Space					
	E.g., Equipment					
Clubs and societies	E.g., Activity grants for clubs					
	E.g., Exercise gear for hire					
Sports, recreation and cultural activities	E.g., Gymnasium					
	E.g., High-performance sports centre					
	E.g., Activity grants for cultural groups					
	E.g., Recreation centre					
TOTAL	-					



We ensure New Zealand's future success.