



**Tertiary Education
Commission**
Te Amorangi Mātauranga Matua



Student services fees

Guidance for tertiary education providers

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Introduction

This guide provides information on student services fees, including:

- how to comply with regulations
- examples of good practice
- 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 learners a student services fee to fund delivery of services that support learners and enhance their academic experience.

How student services fees are regulated

Student services fees are regulated through funding determinations and are subject to the funding conditions administered by the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC). These conditions outline the rules that TEOs must follow when receiving TEC funding.

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

[Funding conditions by year](#)

Areas of compliance

TEOs must comply with all aspects of the conditions if they charge student services fees to domestic learners to help fund student services, and if they are funded through the:

- Delivery at Levels 1 and 2 on the New Zealand Qualifications and Credentials Framework (NZQCF) (DQ1-2) Fund
- Delivery at Levels 3 to 7 (non-degree) on the NZQCF and all industry training (DQ3-7) Fund, or Delivery at Levels 7 (degree) to 10 on the New Zealand Qualifications and Credentials Framework (DQ7-10) Fund.

The funding conditions for student services fees cover six areas:

- which learners can be charged a compulsory fee for student services
- how to involve learners in decision-making
- what services the fees can fund
- how to account for student services fees
- how to report on student services fees
- how to publish student services fee information.

Which learners can be charged a compulsory fee

While most learners can be charged a compulsory fee for student services, apprentices and trainees cannot. Instead, you must give these learners 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 so may have limited access to the funded services.

How to involve learners in decision-making

The funding conditions require providers to either consult or make decisions jointly with their learners (or learner representatives) to determine:

- the maximum fees that learners will pay (including different types of learners, eg, work-based, international, part-time or distance)
- the services that will be delivered within the specified [categories of student services](#)
- how these services will be procured and how expenditure on them will be authorised.

We recommend you review the decision-making processes to ensure learners are sufficiently involved and you are complying with the funding conditions.

Learners or their representatives must be involved in making decisions about many aspects of the student services fee. To ensure student involvement, you must:

- keep an open mind and not predetermine a course of action before involving learners in decision-making
- supply and publicise enough information for learners to respond to proposals in an informed way
- allow enough time for learners to consider proposals and provide feedback
- consider the feedback provided by learners and whether any changes are required.

If, instead of undertaking a joint decision-making process, you choose to make decisions about student services fees in consultation with enrolled learners or their representatives, you must:

- not predetermine the outcome of the consultation
- clearly communicate and publicise proposals
- allow enough time for learners to consider proposals and provide feedback
- give due consideration to learner feedback, and
- listen to what learners have to say and consider alternative proposals.

Engaging learners: examples of good processes

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



Fee setting: examples of good processes

- Set different fees for different sites to reflect the services learners can access, particularly if you have multiple campuses that offer different services.
- Set different fees for different learners. For example, charge a lower fee to distance learners or work-based learners who cannot access all the services.
- Grant refunds if a learner withdraws from their studies (a pro-rata refund for the period of their enrolment or aligned with your withdrawal and refund policy)¹ and publish your refund policy so learners are informed.

What services the fees can fund

Currently, student services fees can support delivery of the following categories of services:

Advocacy and legal advice

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

Careers information, advice and guidance

Supporting learners' transition into post-study employment.

Childcare services

Providing affordable childcare services while parents are studying.

Clubs and societies

Supporting learner clubs and societies, including by providing administrative support and facilities for clubs and societies.

Counselling services

Providing non-academic counselling and pastoral care (eg, chaplains).

Employment information

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

Financial support and advice

Providing hardship assistance and advice to learners with financial issues.

Health services

Providing health care and related welfare services.



¹ 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 see [Student withdrawals and refunds – NZQA](#).

Media

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

Sports, recreation and cultural activities

Providing sports, recreation, and cultural activities for learners.

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

How to account for student services fees

You 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 your 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.



How to report on student services fees

Tertiary education institutions (TEIs) must report on student services fees in their annual reports.

Registered private training establishments (PTEs) must provide a written report to the us each year no later than 14 days after it is provided to learners. A copy of the report must be sent to:

Requirements for Student Services Fees Submissions
Monitoring and Crown Ownership
The Tertiary Education Commission
PO Box 27048
Wellington 6141

Or by email to: ssf@tec.govt.nz

All reports must:

- describe each type of student service that the fee supports – note that types of student services are distinct from the categories of student services (eg, 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](#))
- include the student services fee amount charged per EFTS or academic year (however it is calculated)
- include a statement of how you are complying with the accounting requirements.

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

How to publish student services fee information

As well as writing reports, you must have certain student services fee information available on your website. This ensures that learners are informed of their rights and how they can participate in related decision-making. It increases the transparency of student services fee processes, as well as learner involvement.

Information that must be displayed prominently on your website

If you are charging student services fees, you must have a section on your website that is specific to student fees. It must be accessible, and the information must be displayed prominently.

You must, as soon as reasonably practicable each year, publish this information on your website:

- a description of the services that the student services fees support (ie, each type of service that the fees support, not just the categories of student services offered)
- a statement of the fee income and expenditure for each type of student service
- the fee charged per EFTS or academic year (or however it is calculated) for each campus and each type of learner, if different fees are charged (eg, if there is a reduced fee for distance learners, or for a campus that has different services available)
- a description of the current year’s student services fee decision-making process, including the decisions that were consulted on, how consultation with learners took place, a summary of learner feedback, what the decisions were, and the extent to which learner feedback was incorporated into those decisions

- a description of how learners can be involved in student services fees decisions for the following year, ie, how you propose to consult with learners and what issues might 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 learners in related decisions.

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

- links to the different services that the fees help fund, so learners can easily access these
- information on fee exemptions, pro-rata rates available, refunds or rebates
- student services fee policy documents
- documents, learner survey information or feedback received on student services fees
- forums for learners to give feedback on services and your practices related to student services fees
- contact details for fee queries
- key dates and information for upcoming learner meetings and consultation opportunities.

Non-compliance with funding conditions

The compliance requirements for institutions charging student services fees are set out in TEC's funding conditions. We can request information from TEOs to help determine whether they are complying with conditions and can also undertake audits or investigations to assure ourselves of TEO compliance.

If we determine a breach of funding conditions has occurred, we can 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.

More information Student services fees can be found on our website [Student services fees](#).

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 are the student services fees?** Identify the fee charged per equivalent full-time student (EFTS) and, if offered, pro-rata rates for part-time, distance and work-based learners. If you have multiple campuses, you need to specify the fee charges for each different campus. If you charge a different fee for international learners, this should also be specified.
- **What student services do you offer?** Provide a description of the actual services the fee funds under the category of services headings (ie, give sub-categories; don't just repeat the generic descriptors from the funding determination).
- **Report income and expenditure.** Provide a breakdown of the fee income and expenditure for each type of student service. The table below is 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 your 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.
- **How do you involve learners in decision-making?** This is not a requirement in a TEI's annual report or a registered PTE's report for learners. However, including information about how student services fee decisions are made and how learners can be involved increases transparency and encourages participation. Good practice would:
 - provide a contact for related queries
 - specify how learners were involved in decisions related to the current student services fee – including setting the fee amount, determining the services offered, procuring those services and authorising expenditure
 - indicate how learners 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 you offer</i>	Service type <i>List the specific types of service funded within each category</i>	Revenue			Expenditure	Surplus/ (Deficit)
		Student services fee income	Other revenue	Total revenue	Student services fee expenditure	
Advocacy and legal advice	Eg, class representative network					
	Eg, tenancy advice service					
Careers information, advice and guidance	Eg, CV assistance					
	Eg, interview practice, career guides					
Childcare services	Eg, space					
	Eg, equipment					
Clubs and societies	Eg, activity grants for clubs					
	Eg, exercise gear for hire					
Counselling services	Eg, chaplaincy					
	Eg, wellbeing workshops					
Employment information	Eg, career expos					
	Eg, online job portal					
Financial support and advice	Eg, budgeting services					
	Eg, savings workshops					
Health services	Eg, subsidised GP clinic					
	Eg, crisis support service					
Media	Eg, student radio					
	Eg, student magazine					
Sports, recreation and cultural activities	Eg, gymnasium					
	Eg, high-performance sports centre					
	Eg, activity grants for cultural groups					
	Eg, recreation centre					
TOTAL	-					



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