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Student Senate Induction Manual

Prepared by

Max Ryan

Student Senate Executive Officer

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Contents

[What is the Student Senate? 1](#_Toc145326767)

[What is expected of Senate Members? 1](#_Toc145326768)

[What are the benefits to being on the Senate? 1](#_Toc145326769)

[Who is on the Senate? 1](#_Toc145326770)

[What is the time commitment for the Senate? 2](#_Toc145326771)

[Who Supports Senate Members? 2](#_Toc145326772)

[Executive Officer 2](#_Toc145326773)

[Senate Advisors 2](#_Toc145326774)

[What is the Student Services & Amenities Fee? 3](#_Toc145326775)

[How much do higher education students pay? 3](#_Toc145326776)

[What are the duties and responsibilities of Student Senate in relation to the SSAF? 3](#_Toc145326777)

[What can SSAF funding be spent on? 4](#_Toc145326778)

[Senate Responsibilities 5](#_Toc145326779)

[All Senate Members 5](#_Toc145326780)

[Code of Conduct 5](#_Toc145326781)

[Chair: 6](#_Toc145326782)

[Vice Chair: 7](#_Toc145326783)

[Elected Members 7](#_Toc145326784)

[Removal of members 7](#_Toc145326785)

[Resignation of members 7](#_Toc145326786)

[Absence 7](#_Toc145326787)

[How to communicate with the student body 8](#_Toc145326788)

[Face to Face Communication 8](#_Toc145326789)

[Senate Office 8](#_Toc145326790)

[Senate on the Sofa 8](#_Toc145326791)

[Senate events/bbqs 8](#_Toc145326792)

[Student Forums 9](#_Toc145326793)

[Planning your forum 9](#_Toc145326794)

[Marketing the Forum 10](#_Toc145326795)

[At the Forum 10](#_Toc145326796)

[What happens after a Student Forum? 10](#_Toc145326797)

[Student Senate Meetings 11](#_Toc145326798)

[Meeting Protocol 11](#_Toc145326799)

[Quorum 11](#_Toc145326800)

[Meeting Procedures 12](#_Toc145326801)

[The Agenda 12](#_Toc145326802)

[Attendance 12](#_Toc145326803)

[Apologies 12](#_Toc145326804)

[Motions or Amendments 12](#_Toc145326805)

[Minutes 13](#_Toc145326806)

[Voting 13](#_Toc145326807)

[Observers 13](#_Toc145326808)

[Best Practice 13](#_Toc145326809)

[Federation University Structure 14](#_Toc145326810)

# What is the Student Senate?

The Federation University Student Senate was established in 2012, following the introduction of the Student Services and Amenities Fee. The Student Senate represents students and provides a voice to make recommendations about the student experience, including but not limited to student amenities and services. The Senate also acts as an advice-giving body to the Vice-Chancellor, through the Dean of Students and Registrar.

# What is expected of Senate Members?

As a FedUni Senate Member it is expected that you will be both a representative voice and a student leader. It is expected that you will consult with the student body, gathering feedback and working to make a positive change to the student experience in areas such as:

* Student amenities and services
* Federation University’s policies and procedures in regard to student life
* Student life for students based on campus, studying online or via distance education
* Federation University’s physical, cultural and technological learning environments

Senate members should communicate regularly with the students they are representing in order to understand the general student opinion to University’s projects when required. You will be actively involved with Senate activities and meetings, as well as feeding back student opinion to University projects.

# What are the benefits to being on the Senate?

There are many benefits that come with being part of the FedUni Student Senate, including:

* Opportunities to develop and enhance leadership skills
* Opportunities to increase networks within the University through engagement of both staff and students
* Opportunities to raise your professional profile
* Enhancing professional development through leadership workshops
* Gaining experience and knowledge in relation to the functioning and organisation of committee meetings.
* Building skills and work experience to add to your resume, increasing your employability.
* Taking part in functions and events at FedUni

# Who is on the Senate?

The FedUni Student Senate is made up of both Elected and Ex-Officio members.

* **Elected members** are appointed by the student body through an election process
* **Ex-Officio members** are co-opted onto the Senate via positions that they hold on other FedUni Committees or boards. They have also been through an election process for the committee/board they sit on

# What is the time commitment for the Senate?

It is expected that Senate members will commit a minimum of 2hrs per week to Senate business. This will vary dependent upon the role that you may take within the Senate. Members are also required to attend up to 8 Senate meetings per year.

# Who Supports Senate Members?

# Executive Officer

The Executive Officer’s main role is to provide advice and support to Senate members by carrying out the following actions:

* Promoting and coordinating the nomination and election process
* Inducing official and ex-officio members
* Collating agendas, meeting minutes and student feedback
* Acting as a point of contact for Senate members and general enquiries
* Working closely with Senate members to organise activities such as Forums
* Assisting with promotional activities

The Executive Officer does not have voting rights.

# Senate Advisors

Senate Advisors are senior FedUni staff members in place to support the Student Senate, by giving advice to members on University matters when requested. Advisors assist whenever possible with a range of topics including, but not limited to:

* FedUni policies and procedures
* Connecting Senate members with appropriate contacts
* Providing important historical information
* Advising on funding available to students
* Promoting the Senate
* Supporting members to create action
* Escalating key issues to the senior team where necessary

Senate Advisors are able to submit items for meeting agenda and can actively debate in meetings. However, their role is purely one of support and advice, they are not able to vote on issues raised by the Senate.

The Student Senate currently has two permanent Advisors as detailed in the Terms of Reference. The staff positions are:

* **Director Retention, Innovation and Student Experience**
* **Director, Student Services and Registrar**

In addition, the Student Senate also receives support from the Vice Chancellor in relation to student issues. To ensure communication between the Vice-Chancellor and the Student Senate, a report is submitted to the Vice Chancellor after each meeting. The Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor are both very open to discuss student concerns via the Senate.

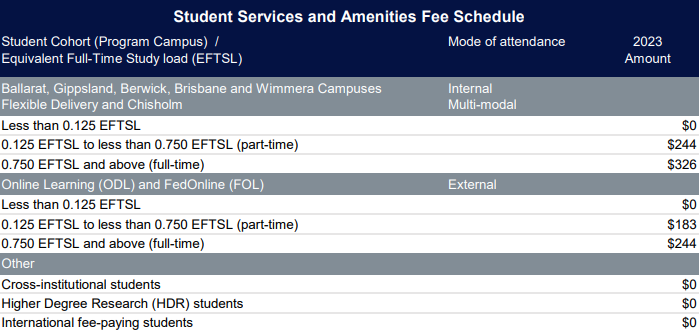
# What is the Student Services & Amenities Fee?

On 11 October 2011, the Australian Parliament passed legislation allowing universities and other higher education providers to charge a fee for student service and amenities of a non-academic nature. SSAF is a compulsory payment for students enrolled in Higher Education on a full time or part time basis.

# How much do higher education students pay?

The yearly fee is calculated and charged progressively for each semester, and is based on your enrolled load within a calendar year. The maximum amount charged to any student enrolled in 2022 is $315 and may be less depending on your program study mode and enrolled load.

The following fee structures apply to higher education students studying in a Commonwealth Supported or Domestic Fee Paying place.



# What are the duties and responsibilities of Student Senate in relation to the SSAF?

The duties and responsibilities of the Student Senate are to discuss issues that are referred to them by the senior bodies within Federation in relation to the Government requirements for student services and amenities. To consult, discuss and consider all advice from the student body (Higher Education, TAFE, VET, VCAL), also including partner providers (within Australia) and students studying online or via distance education. Further, make suggestions to the Vice-Chancellor, through the Dean, or appropriate university body about student services and amenities at campuses and partner provider’s locations and the use of SSAF funding.

# What can SSAF funding be spent on?

Universities that charge a student services and amenities fee will only be able to spend the fee on the provision of the following services:

* Providing food or drink to students on a campus of the University
* Supporting a sporting or other recreational activity by student
* Supporting the administration of a club whose members are mostly students
* Caring for children of students
* Providing legal services to students
* Promoting health or welfare of students
* Helping students secure accommodation
* Helping students obtain employment or advice on careers
* Helping students with their financial affairs
* Helping students obtain insurance against personal accidents
* Support debating by students
* Providing libraries and reading rooms (other than those provided for academic purposes) for students
* Supporting an artistic activity by students
* Supporting the production and dissemination to students of media whose content is provided by students
* Helping students develop skills for study, by means other than undertaking courses of study in which they are enrolled
* Advising on matters arising under the University's rules (however described)
* Advocating students' interests in matters arising under the University's rules (however described)
* Giving students information to help them in their orientation
* Helping meet the specific needs of overseas students relating to their welfare, accommodation and employment
* Universities can choose to deliver the services and amenities themselves or contract a third party to deliver the services and amenities on their behalf.

**SSAF funding cannot be used for the provision of academic services, or used to support political parties or the election of a person to a Commonwealth, State or Territory Parliament or local Government body.**

# Senate Responsibilities

# All Senate Members

* Elected and Ex-Officio Student Senate members are expected to consult with their student body, regarding actions, policies and new developments at Federation University affecting student life, via forums, surveys, email and social media
* They will attend up to 8 meetings per year
* Conduct regular hours in student consultation and attend induction program
* Be fully prepared for meeting having read over all relevant documents prior to attending
* It is expected that Senate members will actively contribute to discussions at meetings, providing feedback from relevant student groups in relation to actions, policies and new developments within FedUni
* Senate members should read and respond to all emails and social media messages
* Senate members should be actively involved with and attend Portfolio meetings (limit of 2 portfolios per member)
* It is also necessary for Senate members to separate their personal views/contributions/feedback from that of the students they are representing

# Code of Conduct

* They should inform the Chair if there is any conflict of interest with regards to any matter that is listed on the agenda and regard this in the Conflict of Interest Register
* If contacted by the media, Senate members are requested to direct these inquires to the Student Senate Executive Officer in the first instance
* Respect the rights of other students and staff and act in accordance with the Student Senate Terms of Reference and FedUni’s policies and procedures
* Ask for directions and support to clarify your role or any issues that may arise within your role
* Attend training, including induction, as related to your position with the Senate
* Senate members must abide by the FedUni policies and procedures

# Chair:

**Position Summary**

The Chair is elected by the Senate Members and can either be an Elected or Ex-Officio member. The Chair must ensure the Student Senate functions properly, and that there is full participation during meetings with all relevant matters are discussed and that effective decisions are made and carried out.

The role of the chair requires work between meetings, external representation of the organisations, and work with University staff. Chairing the Student Senate requires diplomacy and leadership skills of a high level.

**Key Responsibilities:**

* People management, motivating and supporting Senate members to create action
* Acting as the public face of the Student Senate, including attending key university events and meetings, and presenting on behalf of the Senate where necessary
* In conjunction with the Executive Officer decides on the Agenda items for all meetings
* Prior to the meeting the Chair ensures that they are informed of all the content of the agenda and papers to be discussed at the meeting
* The Chair manages all meetings, ensuring they are properly organised and a quorum is present for voting purposes
* The Chair allows for the diversity of student interest and views
* Chairing official Senate meetings, including facilitating discussion among members, opening and closing the meeting, reporting the background and key information on agenda items
* The Chair is also responsible to initiate and/or support the gathering of feedback from students where direct discussion from the student body may be of importance
* The Chair is responsible to provide information in relation to student amenities for consideration to the Vice-Chancellor
* The Chair in partnership with the Executive Officer prepares an annual report for presentation to the University Council on the operation of Federation University Australia’s Student Senate and status of recommendations made to the Vice-Chancellor
* The Chair actively promotes Federation University Student Senate and its work.

# Vice Chair:

**Position Summary**

The Vice-Chair is elected by the Senate members and can be either an Elected or Ex-Officio member.

**Key Responsibilities**

* The Vice-Chair will carry out the chair’s duties in his or her absence, with the acknowledgement of the Senate as being capable and suitable to do so
* The Vice-Chair will provide support and assistance to the Chair in carrying out their responsibilities and may take on specific duties from the chair where delegated and appropriate.
* There is a total time commitment of 3-4 hrs per week for the Vice-Chair

# Elected Members

See individual position descriptions

# Removal of members

Within the Senate, circumstances can occur which require the removal of members. This can occur if:

* An elected member fails to attend 3 consecutive meetings without asking for a leave of absence from the Chair
* If they have been found to have neglected their duties, or disregarded the objectives of the organisation
* If a member is hindering the Senate though behaviour that is disruptive and disrespectful to other members or impedes the Chair directing the meeting; or
* If a Senate member has engaged in any breach or discipline or misconduct in relation to any matter

In these circumstances the member must be told in writing of the allegation or breach of duties, at least one week prior to the Senate meeting. They can respond in writing, and attend and be heard at that meeting. Subsequently, the Senate can vote and it is four fifths majority vote the member is removed from their position.

# Resignation of members

An elected member of the Student Senate, other than the Chair, may resign by writing delivered to the Chair.

The Chair may resign by writing delivered to the Vice-Chancellor.

# Absence

If an elected member expects to be absent from more than 3 consecutive meetings in any calendar year, the members has options to:

* Seek a leave of absence in writing from the chair
* Resign their position from the Committee in writing delivered to the Chair

# How to communicate with the student body

It is important that all Senate Members are aware of student issues and opinions. This means talking to other students and letting them know you are there to represent them. You will need to be proactive in your approach, as you will be representing the needs of more students than just your own circle of friends. Federation Univeristy’s Student Senate members will be expected to lead forums and consult with students from their elected representative area, and further afield, for example school board representatives will be expected to communicate with students within their school, but they may also be needed to support Mt. Helen representatives to run a student forum.

# Face to Face Communication

# Senate Office

Senate office are located at Mt Helen, Camp St and Churchill Campus; these provide a central point where students and Senate Representatives an meet to discuss issues. It is also a place where Portfolios can meet when not requiring videoconferencing equipment. Mt Helen Senate offices are located at the back of the Student Lounge on the second floor of the Albert Coates building. Camp St offices are located in Camp Street’s Student Lounge on the 1st Floor of the Old Library building. It is a shared space.

# Senate on the Sofa

Currently SMB and Horsham do not have Senate office spaces due to limited space on campus. Instead previous Senate members have adopted the approach of locating themselves at a certain location on campus at the same time each week so that students can meet to discuss issues with them. We informally refer to this approach as ‘Senate on the Sofa’, this allows great visibility of Senate members on campus and helps build relationships with students and staff.

# Senate events/bbqs

Throughout the year there are events and BBQs that provide further opportunity to be able to talk with the student body and obtain feedback within a casual environment.

# Student Forums

Student Senate members will hold at least two forums during the academic year, which are open to all students on their relevant campus. Forums are open meetings designed to bring together to discuss real and relevant issues that they deal with at Federation University. Forums give students a chance to have open discussion and express their concerns, they also allow the Senate Members a chance to gather genuine feedback to create action from. All Senate members based at a particular campus should endeavour to work with other Senate members to run forums. Members should let reps from other campuses know of their planned forums and allow members from other campuses to contribute topics to gather feedback on.

Student Forums vary hugely in the numbers of students attending, it is not uncommon for Mt Helen forums to attract up to 100 students, with other campuses having anything between 4 to 40 students.

# Planning your forum

Forums are planned in consultation with the Executive Officer and Senate Chair. In planning your forums you will need to consider the points below:

* **Date and Time**

Establishing a date and time for your forum is very dependent on the student cohort you are attempting to attract to the forum. This will vary for each campus and forums should be held at a time that provides maximum interaction with the student body. It is advisable to plan your first forum at the end of Semester 1 and your second forum in the middle of Semester 2.

Talk with program coordinators to find out which day of the week most students are on campus, and if there is a particular time during the day that students are free.

* **Venue**

The forum should be held in a venue that allows all students the opportunity to attend. It also helps if the venue is very visible, or it is close to where lots of students might walk by.

* **Method of Facilitation**

It is up to you how you facilitate the forums, encourage group discussion amongst students and how feedback is recorded. Here are examples of how forums have been facilitated in the past.

* + Note Taker/Facilitator – One Senate Member designated as a note taker whilst another facilitates discussion with students
  + Sticky Notes – Hand out post it notes for students to write one positive and two negatives about the University
  + Questions – Write key questions on individual pieces of butcher paper and ask students to write comments and feedback on the butcher paper
* **Equipment**

Once you have decided on a facilitation style, consider what equipment you will need and book it through the Executive Officer. Some examples might include:

* Butchers Paper
* Pens
* Sticky Notes
* Senate promotional material
* Food

Past Senate experience has shown that by providing free food you have greater involvement from students. Dependant on your campus will also determine the food.

# Marketing the Forum

Marketing your forum to the relevant student body can occur in a number of ways:

* Word of mouth
* Posters
* Campus/Uni wide email
* Senate Facebook and Instagram page
* TV Screens around Federation University

# At the Forum

Having Inclusive Participation – as the Senate facilitator you should help keep the discussion open and flowing allowing everyone to have a chance to fully and equally participate and share their views. It is important to encourage students to listen to each other as well as giving their own feedback.

Facilitation skills:

* Student Senate members assist with the facilitation of forums by engaging and interacting with students who are present to encourage them to document their concerns.
* The facilitator does not ‘lead’ the discussion but helps direct it towards a positive and productive outcome.
* The facilitator helps channel the issues raised by participants into organised and recorded ideas while encouraging people to share and exchange their thoughts and opinions
* Increasing personal learning – participants should come away with a new ideas and insights shared in the group
* Providing access – Forums extend an opportunity for Federation University’s students to have a voice in a physical setting
* Being a Catalyst for Action – in bringing people together to discuss issues of common concern, ideas can be exchanged that lead to action and new collaborations
* The discussions are documented on butcher’s paper, which is recorded digitally by the senate members responsible for the forum and sent it through to the Executive Officer

# What happens after a Student Forum?

There should be a meeting called by the relevant representatives with the Executive Officer and Senate Advisor to discuss the issues that may have arisen through the forum. Within this meeting the Senate member will be assisted to plan how to act on the feedback collected from the relevant student body.

# Student Senate Meetings

The Student Senate can meet up to 8 times per year, with the option for extra/emergency meetings deemed necessary by members. The meetings are held online with a set day, time suitable to the majority of members.

# Meeting Protocol

* Calls for Agenda Items will be sent out to all Senate members and Advisors via the Executive Officer two weeks prior to each meeting. If you have a proposal to make at the upcoming meeting, papers will ideally be prepared and distributed at the time of the call for agenda items to allow members to read and prepare any feedback on the paper. Please get in touch with the Executive Officer if you would like to make a proposal.
* Notice of a meeting and an electronic copy of the agenda papers shall be circulated by the Executive Officer to each member one week prior to the meeting
* Please RSVP to the Executive Officer
* If you are an apology for the meeting, please email your report to the Executive Officer prior to the meeting
* The Chair supervises all meetings of the Senate; in the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair shall preside over the meeting.
* The Chair guarantees that all items on the agenda are dealt with in sequence unless the meeting agrees otherwise, whilst maintaining order during the meeting
* The Chair allows sufficient time for members to discuss and debate issues, confirming that all members are aware of the decision that has been reached prior to voting
* The Chair allows sufficient time for members to discuss and debate issues, confirming that all members are aware of the decision that has been reached prior to voting.
* The Chair declares the meeting closed when all matters on the agenda have been discussed or transferred to the next meeting.

# Quorum

In order to be able to hold a meeting and vote on matters or motions there needs to be a quorum present. A quorum is defined as 50% of the voting membership. If a quorum is present at the commencement of the meeting, the meeting may continue until attention is drawn to the lack of a quorum. When this occurs, the meeting shall be adjourned until such time as the Chair may determine. Where a meeting Is adjourned for lack of quorum the reconvened meeting shall normally deal only with matters listed for the original meeting which were not dealt with.

Productive meetings require the contribution of all members of the Student Senate, working as a team and taking joint responsibility for ensuring that issues are given due consideration and decision taken are done so in a respectful and positive environment.

# Meeting Procedures

# The Agenda

* Refers to ‘things to be done’
* Provides a guideline for a good meeting
* Distributed at least five working days before the meeting to all members as per the Terms of Reference

# Attendance

Senate members must make every effort to attend all meetings of the Student Senate. In the case of Ex-Officio members they must also ensure that they attend the relevant committee and board meeting for their position.

Where an elected member expects to be absent from more than 3 consecutive meetings in any calendar year, the member must seek a leave of absence in writing from the Chair, or resign their position from the Committee by writing delivered to the Chair at the first meeting of the Senate after it becomes known to the member that the ongoing absence is likely.

# Apologies

Members who are unable to attend should convey their apologies to the Executive Officer prior to the commencement of the meeting. In the case of an apology the Student Representative is still required to email a report to the Executive Officer. The apology shall be presented at the meeting and the report presented to the Chair

# Motions or Amendments

* A motion is a proposition submitted to a meeting with a view to it being adopted by a majority vote
* A motion or amendment shall be couched in definite and precise language and should usually be affirmative in form
* A motion can be proposed, seconded, withdrawn, amended or defeated
* A motion or amendment needs to be proposed, then seconded. The motion or amendment is then put to the committee by the Chair by asking, ‘all in favour?’
* In the case of an equality of voting on a question, by motion of the Senate the matter will be referred to a sub-Committee of relevant Senate members for decision. Members of the sub-Committee are chosen by resolution of the Senate
* A resolution is a motion that has been carried by the requisite majority voting in its favour

# Minutes

* Minutes are a written record of the business of a meeting
* Minutes will be taken and recorded for all meetings of Federation University’s Student Senate
* Minutes will be drafted by the Executive Officer for the approval of the Chair and Advisor, for information within two weeks of the meeting
* At each meeting of Federation University’s Student Senate, the minutes of the last preceding meeting will be amended if incorrect, confirmed and recorded as a true and accurate record
* The minutes will record any declaration of a conflict of interest by a member in respect to business discussed at the meeting
* Minutes of proceedings of every meeting of the Student Senate are recorded and maintained for that purpose. Any such minutes bearing the signature of the Chair are prima facie evidence of the proceedings of the meeting.
* In addition to being provided to members who attend meetings, the minutes are placed on Federation University’s Student Senate website for access by staff and students

The formal recorded minutes of the meeting will summarise the outcomes for matters identified as confidential but the version of the minutes to be placed on the web will have all referenced to confidential matters removed.

# Voting

* Upon any question arising at a meeting of the Senate, a member has one vote only
* All votes must be given personally (proxy voting not permitted)
* In the case of equality of voting on a question, by motion of the Senate the matter will be referred to a sub-Committee of relevant Senate members for decision. Members of the sub-Committee are chosen by resolution of the Senate.

# Observers

* Meetings of the FedUni Student Senate may be attended by people approved by the Chair to attend the meeting as an observer
* Observers of the FedUni Student Senate meeting will be entitled to see and hear the proceedings of the Senate and will have the right to contribute to debate at Senate meetings

Observers at a FedUni Student meeting may be required to leave the meeting by the Chair, or by majority vote of members, or when the Senate considers any confidential information.

# Best Practice

* All members to have their camera turned on when attending the meeting
* If a member would like to speak, notify the Chair by pressing the ‘Hands Up’ icon in Microsoft Teams
* Wait to be invited to speak by the Chair

# Federation University Structure

The University Council uses the ‘Federation University Australia Act 2010’ and the ‘Role of the Council’ as a guide for when making important decision in relation to the University.

