

draft **Position Statement:** Purpose-built student accommodation

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1. Policy intent

To support the provision and assessment of purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA) that seeks to promote well-located, high-quality accommodation that is safe, comfortable, and attractive, while providing broad assessment criteria to ensure consistency within the State planning framework and to improve design outcomes.

2. Accommodation for students in WA

As PBSA is an emerging development type in a Western Australian context, there is a lack of current guidance to understand the land use, how these buildings operate and what development controls should apply.

This Position Statement is intended to provide guidance on the key considerations to PBSA applicants/providers, and for decision makers.

For the purpose of this Position Statement, ***purpose-built student accommodation*** means a purpose-built housing typology whose predominant purpose is accommodation for:

- a. students while studying at a tertiary education facility; and
- b. that typically provides students with a principal place of residence for three months or more; and
- c. that may have shared facilities, such as a communal living room, kitchen and amenities; and
- d. that may provide accommodation for staff or visiting staff to a tertiary education facility.

PBSA should be designed and built with students in mind, featuring modern facilities and amenities that cater to their needs. The accommodation is predominantly in apartment style complexes located off campus and are

open to students from any education provider/institution. The accommodation can provide a fully self-contained apartment, however, other options also include sharing an apartment/room. The building also provides shared and communal spaces, and amenities that create a community within the building and encourage socialisation.

The benefit PBSA offers, includes convenience, safety, and social opportunities, and makes it an attractive and affordable option for many students. It can also help to establish diverse populations within cities and town centres, making them vibrant and dynamic places to live, whilst also contributing significantly to local economies.

3. Application of this position statement

This position statement applies to the preparation, review and assessment of planning instruments as relevant to PBSA, including but not limited to local planning strategies, local planning schemes and amendments, structure plans, local development plans, local planning policies, and subdivision and development applications throughout Western Australia.

4. Policy objectives

This position statement seeks to:

- a. elevate consideration of accommodation for students in strategic planning
- b. ensure that the development of appropriately located and high-quality purpose-built student accommodation provides a safe and comfortable place for students to live while positively supporting their wellbeing
- c. provide planning guidance for decision-makers to consider in the assessment process, through broad assessment criteria for purpose-built student accommodation.

5. Policy measures

5.1 Strategic planning

Where higher educational institutions exist within or adjacent to a local government area, a local planning strategy should consider, evaluate and provide for future PBSA by incorporating a dedicated section within the Community, Urban Growth and Settlement section of the local planning strategy that details:

- a. existing and proposed supply of student accommodation
- b. medium to long-term demand for student accommodation along with associated targets
- c. an analysis of the gaps in the provision of student accommodation
- d. opportunities and constraints to facilitate future provision of PBSA.

The level of subsequent detail required in a local planning strategy should be commensurate with the extent of opportunities and constraints identified, including consideration of:

- a. the identification of any specific sites and/ or locations, where appropriate
- b. incentives intended to be outlined in local planning schemes or other local government planning instruments to facilitate increased supply, where required.

PBSA should be located close to universities and other tertiary institutions and well-integrated within the established urban context, serviced by adequate public transport and cycle networks and close to health, community services and facilities that will service the everyday needs of future residents.

5.2 Statutory planning

Local planning schemes should align with the local strategic planning strategy, as per the above, to facilitate the streamlined delivery of the accommodation. PBSA may be located within residential zones, mixed use and commercial/centre type zones, in line with the local strategic planning framework (section 5.1).

The existing land use 'residential building', as defined in the R-Codes, is broad enough to include PBSA, and should be the land use definition for this form of development (unless an existing local planning scheme has a specific definition).

'Residential Building' in the R-Codes (Appendix 1 – Definitions)

"a building or portion of a building, together with rooms and outbuildings separate from such building but incidental thereto; such building being used or intended, adapted or designed to be used for the purpose of human habitation:

- temporarily by two or more persons; or
- permanently by seven or more persons, who do not comprise a single family, but does not include a hospital or sanatorium, a prison, a hotel, a motel or a residential school."

To ensure that the accommodation is limited to PBSA within the 'residential building', it is recommended that a condition on the development approval is imposed to specify PBSA as the land use on the site.

The criteria outlined in **Table 1** is intended to provide guidance in the assessment of PBSA. The criteria will inform and guide landowners, proponents, designers, reviewers, referral agencies and decision-makers to achieve good design outcomes, aligned with the design principles under State Planning Policy 7.0 Design of the Built Environment.

Table 1 – Purpose-built student accommodation – Assessment criteria

<p>1. General</p>	<p>a. to ensure PBSA embodies principles of good urban design</p> <p>b. to encourage PBSA to locate close to one or more of the following locations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) tertiary educational institution (ii) railway station (iii) bus route that provides access to a tertiary educational institution (iv) Activity Centre <p>c. to ensure that PBSA has convenient access to a range of commercial, retail, entertainment and social facilities</p>
<p>2. Context and character</p>	<p>a. to ensure new PBSA responds to character and context (current and future) when considering design elements including mass, form, scale and landscaping</p> <p>b. where located within or adjacent to 'Residential' zoned land, a Management Plan should be submitted that outlines how the development will be managed, used and operated to ensure that the site will not adversely impact surrounding properties</p>
<p>3. Adaptive reuse of the facility</p>	<p>a. to encourage building design that is adaptive and flexible to future needs, where appropriate and practicable</p>
<p>4. Traffic management and carparking</p>	<p>a. to provide for convenient and appropriate provision of on-site car parking</p> <p>b. to only consider a reduction to car parking requirements where an evidence-based rationale is provided. Where a proposal has convenient walking or public transport access to educational facilities, shops and local services, this may support a reduction in car parking provision</p> <p>c. to provide for convenient and appropriate provision of bicycle parking/storage for students and where appropriate, a shared facility/enclosure should include a basic bicycle repair station</p> <p>d. to cater for electric vehicle charging infrastructure, both vehicles and smaller motorised bicycles or scooters</p> <p>e. to provide for adequate access for servicing vehicles for building maintenance and deliveries</p> <p>f. to ensure waste collection locations are convenient and safe for both students to use and waste operators to access</p>
<p>5. Built form and scale</p>	<p>a. to ensure that bulk, mass and height of new PBSA responds to that of the adjacent and nearby built form character (current and future), the topography, the general pattern of streetscape, and the views, vistas and landmarks of the location, reinforcing a coherent local identity</p> <p>b. to ensure building layout balances the requirement for passive surveillance on the street, internal amenity, and solar access</p>
<p>6. Functionality and build quality</p>	<p>a. to ensure that every PBSA can comfortably accommodate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) a bed accessible from at least one long side (ii) a study area with a desk and storage space, which is also sufficient for dining purposes if a separate table or bench cannot be accommodated (iii) a robe/drawer unit with ample storage space for clothing and personal items (iv) internet and TV connection and accessible power points (v) where private kitchen facilities are provided, there should be adequate room for a microwave, stove top cooker, fridge, clear bench space, sink with both hot and cold running water, as well as storage and a space for waste/ recycling (vi) where private bathroom facilities are provided, there should be adequate room for a shower, toilet, washbasin and storage space <p>b. to ensure each habitable room:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) has solar access and natural ventilation (ii) is designed and located to meet acceptable residential standard for sound attenuation, to mitigate acoustic and visual impacts from servicing, pedestrian and vehicle traffic from within or outside the complex <p>c. to consider the provision of common area facilities within the complex that can be booked by students</p>

7. Landscape quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. to ensure the provision of high amenity landscaping within shared spaces b. to ensure that sustainable landscaping is an integral part of the design solution c. where appropriate, to encourage the permeability of external ground surfaces d. where appropriate, to provide for landscaping within the front setback area to protect and/or enhance the streetscape and encourage the retention of existing canopy trees e. to provide deep soil areas to support and sustain the development of tree canopy, or where this cannot be achieved, alternative landscape approaches
8. Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. to encourage achievement of Green Star certification, or an equivalent sustainability accreditation b. to demonstrate commitment to sustainability initiatives and integration of passive design measures, evident within the design c. to provide functional waste management, relating to locations and access to bins, bin storage and collection points, including convenient access to bin chutes (if proposed)
9. Amenity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. to provide a variety of apartment types with different numbers of bedrooms, with private and shared areas b. to provide accessible room/s that can accommodate residents with a disability c. to ensure the design of building minimises direct overlooking of habitable rooms within the site and from neighbouring properties d. to articulate the PBSA built form and avoid small apartments / studios with limited functionality and amenity e. where appropriate, to encourage ground level tenancies which engage with street frontages and supports a variety of active uses that will enhance the amenity of the development and surrounding locality f. to encourage the provision of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) secure foyer areas (ii) designated collection areas for deliveries (iii) laundry, washing and drying facilities (iv) adequate long term storage facilities in a secure central location (unless suitable in-room storage is provided) g. to ensure the communal open space areas, such as indoor spaces, ground level open space, balconies or terraces to the street, or rooftop zones: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) are universally accessible and conveniently accessed from the student amenities area (ii) maximise dimensions for well-proportioned functional spaces that meets the recreational needs of the students (iii) provides shared communal spaces that contribute to the functioning and amenity of PBSA and promote interaction between students (iv) considers including 'quiet' zones as well as more 'active' social spaces (v) provides both indoor and outdoor spaces (vi) demonstrates consideration of the impacts of co-located spaces and their function (i.e. noise, odours, privacy, time of use)
10. Legibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. to encourage the creation of clear, universally accessible physical and visual links for entrances to the development b. to provide clear communication of main entries and movement networks for pedestrians and vehicles, including private and public areas
11. Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. to ensure, through good design, that the PBSA responds to community needs by providing an environment that supports a diverse range of students and facilitates social interaction within and external to the site b. to facilitate the ongoing use and management of the site that responds to the needs of the students
12. Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. to encourage high quality design outcomes and demonstrate consideration for 'crime prevention through environmental design' (CPTED) principles b. to ensure that students' health and wellbeing is considered during lockdowns or isolation periods