Course Fees

Effective: Moved to Policy Library from UPM 2.5(13)
Updated/Revised: January 16, 2019
Contact: Office of the Registrar

Policy Statement

Course fees, charged to students, provide a distinct resource to enhance the instruction beyond what is ordinarily provided. Revenue from course fees support students’ experiences in these specific courses for which they are enrolled. The minimum charge is $25 per student. Variable course fees are not allowed.

Definition and Examples

Course fees are warranted when the proposed fee results in enhancement of the educational experience beyond that ordinarily provided. Whereas, ordinary costs of a course are expected to be borne by the department offering the course.

Examples of costs that are permitted as course fees:

- Amortized replacement costs of equipment used in the course, with an expected usable life of less than five years. Examples include equipment used for a particular course and not a particular department.
- Equipment rental. Examples include athletic equipment used in a kinesiology course.
- Instructional materials and supplies used as part of the course. These are items with a unit cost of less than $5,000. Examples include laboratory items and teaching aids.
- Maintenance costs of instructional equipment used for a particular course.
- Professional and scientific staff time (such as lab and field technicians) in enhancing the students’ experiences for the specific courses for which they are enrolled.
- Professional support beyond what is ordinarily provided. Examples include staff time that is unique for a particular teaching department.
- Required travel and participation costs for enrolled students to visit off-campus sites. This includes the cost of the instructor’s travel and admission when accompanying students.
- Rental costs for the use of facilities.

Examples of costs that are not permitted as course fees:

- Delivery costs for offering a course off campus. See delivery fee (http://www.registrar.iastate.edu/fees/glossary-of-fees).
- General-purpose computers. See technology fee (http://www.registrar.iastate.edu/fees/glossary-of-fees).
- Guest speakers.
Material related to the mechanics of teaching the course, such as course outlines, syllabi, exams and similar handouts.

- Salary and wages for any university instructor, administrative staff, or teaching assistant with the exception of those employed to provide individual music lessons.
- Supplemental written materials, such as supplemental readings. If a department does not wish to cover the costs of such materials, and the students are to have ownership, the materials should be sold to the students through the university book store or other local distributors. This procedure simplifies the financial transaction, and helps to avoid possible copyright infringement.
- Transportation to sites related to student teaching, clinical assignments and other practical activity. This is considered a personal expense.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

**Instructor**

- Recommends fees, keeping recommendations as low as possible.
- Reviews rates annually and recommends adjustments when appropriate.

**Academic department offering the course**

- Submits requests via the authorization system in AccessPlus prior to assessing a new course fee. The fees must be based on reasonable estimates of the anticipated costs or previous records of actual costs, and should be kept as low as possible.
- Reviews existing course fees annually if there are plans to renew them for the next year’s catalog.
- Separately tracks the revenue and expenses associated with each unique course fee within the university financial system. Revenues should not be co-mingled with other activities of the unit. Billing, posting of revenue and receipt of and payments of course fees must be processed by the Accounts Receivable Office.
- Authorizes the spending of the fees for the intended purpose as stated in the justification submitted for approval.
- Ensures that resources are used wisely and in a manner consistent with university policies.

**Academic college offering the course**

- Reviews and approves course fees submitted.
- Retains documentation supporting the fee amount for a period of 10 years. Course fees should be based on plausible estimates of the anticipated costs or previous records of actual costs. The appropriateness of the amounts charged for course fees cannot be properly justified without complete and accurate documentation of the costs.
- Reviews fiscal year-end balances. Course fee operations are expected to run on a break-even basis for students enrolled in a particular course. Accounts with a fiscal year-end free balance of +/- 20% of the annual course fee revenue requires investigation as follows.
• If an account surplus, consider whether the course fee should be reduced in the future. If a course has not been offered for two consecutive semesters (and a course fee is cancelled), balances may be used in one of the following ways:
  o Fund expenses in courses where fees are not sufficient to cover current consumable costs
  o Consolidate into an account that would have broader applicability to student-focused initiatives
• If the account is in a deficit, consider whether the fee should be increased in the future and whether there are other funding sources that should be used to fund the activity. Accumulated deficits are the responsibility of the departments.

**Senior Vice President and Provost**

• Authorizes exceptions to the course fee policy on a case-by-case basis, for a duration no greater than three years. Special consideration will be given to establish a variable fee for courses that involve different travel locations by section within the same term.
• Conducts annual audits of course fee transactional activity, sharing a summary of findings with the Tuition and Fee Oversight Committee, Provost Council, and Academic Fiscal Officers.

**Registrar**

• Makes available the complete cost of attendance for students’ review prior to course registration.
• Establishes process and deadlines to ensure that this information is available for publication in the schedule of courses.

**Who to Call with Questions**

• The fiscal officer in each college provides interpretation of the course fee policy: advises on the collection of fees, account structure, and account balances; and considers requests for exceptions.
• The Registrar’s Scheduling and Fees Office handles questions and comments regarding the course fee policy.

**Resources**

• [AccessPlus Login Page](#)
• [Accounts Receivable Office](#)
• [Office of the Registrar](#)
• [Special Course Fees Definitions, Processes and Procedures](#)