

Detailed Guidelines and Procedures for Establishing Course/Lab Fees

Guiding Principles

The allocation of general funds, including tuition and mandatory fees, through the regular annual budget process provides the primary resources necessary for faculty, staff, facilities, course instruction, IT, and academic program support for on-campus instruction.

Additional student course or lab fees are only appropriate and shall only be approved for documented extraordinary and non-routine costs of consumables, materials, services, or external activity fees used exclusively in the classroom and/or for course instruction.

The following criteria, including allowable and disallowed items, are intended to ensure that students will pay the same for equal levels of service across all schools/colleges. No incentives should exist to choose a similar class in one department over another because of differences in class fees.

For the purposes of these guidelines, the terms course fee, lab fee, or class fee are synonymous. These guidelines are a companion to [SPG 601.39](#) Student Tuition and Fees.

Class fee assessment should be transparent and clearly communicated to the public.

Course/Lab Fee Criteria

Allowable Items

Non-routine consumables or equipment used exclusively for classroom purposes and consumed or replaced each term (or retained by the student) may be charged as class fees. Specifically:

- Materials and supplies where the a per item cost is less than \$5,000
- Specialized equipment or devices fully consumed within a course.
- Printed materials, licensing, or copyright fees (e.g. lab experiments, case studies)
- Goods that are retained by the students (e.g. videos, reference materials, software).
- Admission, entry, event, or participation fees for out-of-classroom learning experiences.
- Direct pass-through charges for materials, supplies, devises, services, or events that could be purchased by the student through available commercial channels if justified by special circumstances, or deemed to be in the best interest of the students' learning experience, university business practices, or student financial accountability.

Disallowed Items

The following are specifically excluded from lab fees:

- Faculty or staff compensation
- Routine classroom supplies such as copies of syllabi and blue books
- Facilities and infrastructure (rent and utilities)
- Administrative overhead
- Instructional materials, supplies, or devices available to students through local or convenient online commercial channels, which are used on an individual basis, and which can be easily procured and paid for directly by the student. See the exception listed above.

Quick Reference Chart		
Allowable Consumables that represent pure marginal costs associated with a specific course	Unallowable Costs that are assumed to be part of the tuition fee, including instruction, facilities and administrative overhead	Additional Justification Required Unusual marginal costs
Consumable laboratory supplies	Department overhead, such as telephones & lights	Equipment or devices fully consumed within a course
Printed materials, licensing, or copyright fees (e.g. lab experiments, case studies)	Instructional costs (e.g. classroom instruction, help desk, graders)	Extraordinary copying charges
Goods that are retained by students (e.g. videos, reference materials, software)	Incidental costs associated with running any class (e.g. copying exams, equipment not fully consumed within a course, research lab equipment, office equipment)	Inflationary increases that exceed the CPI (Consumer Price Index)
Maintenance and repair of equipment or devices used exclusively for classroom purposes		Fees for in-class experts/speakers/guest presenters
Transportation (e.g. bus/travel cost to play or film)		Lodging*
Admission, entry, or event fees (e.g. tickets to a play)		Special off-campus guided, curated, or expert-led learning activities.

*Fees for lodging are not covered by student VA benefits

Schools/colleges should consider the following points:

- Can the student easily obtain and directly pay for necessary instructional materials, supplies or devices through available commercial channels?
- Can materials be borrowed vs. purchased?
- Can advance planning reduce costs?
- Are fully loaded fees prohibitive for students?
- Is there a choice between expensive state-of-the-art materials and lower cost but still adequate materials?

Class Fee Ranges

Each class fee proposal may include a lower and upper fee range, as follows:

1) Establish the lower end of the range

Calculate minimum fee using a cost-based justification. Cost based justification should include:

- a. All allowable items per the above criteria. Unusual items must be justified and explained in a memo or notes.
- b. Divide the total allowable costs by estimated total enrollment.
- c. Result is the lower end of the fee range.
- d. Departments have the option of reducing the lower end of the range if the lower end represents a substantial increase over existing fees. In that case, departments may propose to phase in the higher fees.

2) Establish the upper end of the range

Increase the minimum by a 10% standard contingency and inflate the increased amount by an estimated five-year inflationary rate. (E.g., if the overall five-year inflation rate is 6.5 %, increase the contingency by 6.5 %.) The result is the upper end of the range.

Example Calculation	
Course Related Expenditures	
Laboratory Supplies (beakers, chemical compounds, antidote)	\$3,000
Transportation (class field trips to Dow Chemical)	5,000
Copyright permissions from author and copies	12,000
TOTAL CONSUMABLES	\$20,000
Estimated Number of Students (avg. of 20 per section - 20 sections)	400
Minimum Course Fee (average cost per student)	\$50
Contingency (10%)	\$55
High End of Range (contingency rate times 6.5% 5-Year Inflation Rate rounded)	\$58.50
PROPOSED LAB FEE RANGE:	\$50 to \$59

Procedure for Requesting a New or Increased Class Fee

1. Complete the Request for Approval of Class Fees form located on the Registrar's Office website.
2. Send your completed request form with documentation to the appropriate Dean for your school/college.
 - Be sure to include supporting documentation detailing the nature of the request and a cost base analysis for the class fee (as described previously under Basic Calculations).
3. With Dean's signed approval, forward the completed package to the Office of the Registrar, Office of Tuition and Fees.
4. The request will be reviewed by the University Fee Committee who has final approval.
5. Fee decisions will be communicated by email to the contact person identified on the request form.

Deadlines

The following are the deadlines set by the Registrar's Office for submission of all class fee requests. Your school/college may have its own deadline established. *Be sure to check with your Dean's Office.*

Lab Fee Request Due Dates:

Winter Term November 1

Spring/Sp-Su/Summer March 1

Fall Term July 1

Requests received after the deadline will be applied to the following relevant term upon approval by the Fee Committee.

FAQ's

- Q. What happens after the request is submitted to the University Fees Committee?
- A. The University Fee Committee has final decision-making authority. If your request for the new class fee is granted, the committee will forward your information to the Registrar, Office of Tuition and Fees. The Office of Tuition and Fees will set up the new lab fee in MPathways, which ultimately feed the necessary sources for course information and printed documentation.
- Q. Does the department have an opportunity to review/revise their current lab fees prior to the start of the term?
- A. Yes. The Office of Tuition and Fees will email the department contact person the Proposed Lab Fee Report. Adjustments to the chartfield should be sent directly to the Office of Tuition and Fees using the request form. Adjustments that include increasing the lab fee must adhere to the aforementioned policy, procedures and deadlines.
- Q. What are some of the department's fiscal responsibilities associated with lab fees?
- A. As is the case with any funds appropriated, collected or received, the department is responsible for ensuring proper controls and reporting are in place to monitor and reconcile activity associated with lab fees in accordance with the established policy. Specifically, Project Grants designated for lab fees should only have acceptable revenue and expense activity based on the policy.
- Q. Do class fees ever expire?
- A. Active class fees do not expire. If, however, a fee has not been assessed in more than three years, it will be inactivated and removed from the published fees that are currently listed on the [RO website](#).
- Q. What happens if the course is cross-listed or Meets Together?
- A. All revenue collected for lab fees is attributed to the chartcom string provided on the request form. If both departments have an established lab fee, funds collected from the lab fees are attributed to the home Department.
- Q. Is there a minimum amount to be considered a class fee?
- A. Yes, a fee must be at least \$25 to be considered.