University Policy 538: Course Fees

Category: Operating Policies
Sub Category: General
Responsible Executive: Executive Vice President and Provost
Policy Custodian: Office of the Provost
Last Revised: 2021/01/27

538.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Establishes the framework to ensure that proper stewardship, guidelines, and internal controls are in place to achieve the highest level of student trust. Ensure that collected fees are used for the direct benefit of the students paying them.

538.2 POLICY

Course fees are used to enhance the educational experience and may be charged when other funding support for a specific course is inadequate or unavailable. General costs related to the development, instruction, and assessment of courses are borne by the department and college.

2.1 Course Fee Guidelines

Course fees are reviewed on a regular, rotating schedule. The fee is based on realistic estimates of the costs or previous records of actual costs and will be kept as low as possible. The charge cannot exceed the cost of providing the product or service available to the student. Course fees should be used each semester for the benefit of the students who paid the fees. In some cases, this may include charging fees for equipment used in the course that must be replaced or repaired on a rotating schedule. Course fees are disclosed to students at the time of registration. The amount and purpose of the course fee must be clearly stated on the first page of the course syllabus. Billing and payment of course fees are through standard University business practices. Collection of course fees in the classroom is not allowed.

2.2 Approved Use of Course Fees

Approved use of course fees may include:

- Computers: use, replacement, repairs, and maintenance
- Computer Software: use, upgrades, and licensing
- Equipment: use, replacement, repairs, and maintenance
- Materials, supplies, and consumables: use and replacement
- Student teaching assistants
- Field trips and class activities in which the entire class participates
- Visiting experts

2.3 Course Fee Accounts

The available balance in course fee accounts will be reviewed annually with investigation occurring if the balance is +/- 10% of the expected annual course fee revenue.

2.3.1 Account Surplus
If the annual review of course fee balances indicates an excess balance (+10% of annual revenue), a course fee reduction or a one-time course fee removal request should be submitted. If a course fee is deleted and a balance remains, the remainder of the revenue should be used in accordance with the original approved budget. If a course is discontinued and a balance remains, the remainder of the revenue should be used to support similar student-oriented costs. Remaining course fees cannot be transferred to general departmental funds.

2.3.2 Account Deficit

Departments are responsible for resolving course fee balance deficits by using departmental funds. If course fee revenue is found to be insufficient to cover approved expenses, departments can submit a course fee increase request.

2.3.3 Refund Policy

Under circumstances in which the purpose for the course fee is cancelled or unavailable, (e.g., a cancelled field trip), students will be refunded. Otherwise, no refunds will be given. In some cases, instructors may need to modify course activities. Instructors may exercise reasonable flexibility, as long as course fees are used to accomplish the same learning objectives and fees are expended during the semester they are accrued and in a manner consistent with policy.

2.3.3 Repair and Replacement of Equipment

Course fees may be accrued over several semesters or years to fund the repair and replacement of more expensive equipment. In these cases, the balance from course fees must be monitored to ensure that course fees are collected, held, and used appropriately.

2.3.4 Accountability

Internal auditors, external auditors, and Provost’s Office personnel have authority to review the effectiveness of course fee controls. They may randomly select courses to be audited for compliance with course fee policy and require the responsible college to justify account balances and document compliance with course fee policy.

538.3 RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 Department Heads

Responsible for reviewing and approving fee requests, writing the Department Head Overview Report, and monitoring uses of course fees.

3.2 College Deans

Responsible for final approval of all fee requests prior to forwarding to Course Fee Review Committee.

3.3 Course Fee Review Committee

Responsible for assessing if the requested fee is approvable according to policy, ensuring that expenditures are appropriate, and issuing final approval.

3.4 Department Business Manager

Responsible for monitoring uses of course fees with department heads and providing support to correctly use course fees.
3.5 Controller’s Office

Responsible for creating new indexes, preparing summary reports, and providing additional support and leadership as needed.

3.6 Provost’s Office

Provide oversight and support of procedures for course fee request, approval, and accountability.

538.4 REFERENCES

Utah System of Higher Education Policy R510, Tuition. The Board shall annually review price competitive tuition data including general and course fee data.

538.5 RELATED USU POLICIES

• None

538.6 DEFINITIONS

6.1 Course Fee

• Utah State University defines a course fee as a charge applied at the course level for expenses directly related to the students’ participation in a course.

Information below is not included as part of the contents of the official Policy. It is provided only as a convenience for readers/users and may be changed at any time by persons authorized by the President, subject to review by the USU Policy Committee.

RESOURCES

Procedures

• Course Fees.

Guidance

• Course Fees.

Related Forms and Tools

• None.

Contacts

• Provost’s Office, 435-797-1166

POLICY HISTORY

Original issue date: 2021/01/27

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