Course Fees Best Practices

Course fees are reviewed and approved at the department level, not course level. This means that departments, not instructors, are responsible for reviewing budgets and submitting course fee requests in Curriculog. Instructors should be involved in the process, however, because they best know the expenses and costs associated with offering a course.

It is recommended that departments form a committee to manage their course fees consisting of at least these members:

- Department head (DH)
- Business Services Representative (BSR)
- An assistant to serve as the course fee point-of-contact (POC)

Other individuals deemed important to the course fee process may also be included on the department course fee committee. For example, if a department has many course fees, it may be useful to have an additional assistant to help gather information and enter proposals into Curriculog.

This department course fee committee should review course fee indices annually to ensure that balances stay within the +/- 10% range of expected annual revenue. Course fee indices with available balances below 10% of expected annual revenue may need the course fee to be increased. Indices with available balances above 10% may need to have the course fee decreased and/or the department head may request to temporarily suspend the course fee for one or two semesters.

The department’s annual course fee review should also ensure that all expenses are in line with approved course fee budgets. Expenses that are not included in a course fee’s approved budget should be removed from the index immediately.

The Course Fee Request Process for a New Fee or Change to an Existing Course Fee.

1) The instructor contacts the department course fee committee to request a new fee or change an existing fee. This process can be determined at the department level. For example, an email may suffice or the department may set up certain times of the year to review any course fee requests.

2) The instructor fills out a budget justification workbook using the appropriate excel budget template found on the [USU course fee website](https://example.com) as part of the initial proposal to the department course fee committee.

   NOTE: Individual instruction courses, (i.e., aviation, music, ADVS riding courses) and courses that use shared facilities (e.g., computer labs, kitchens) require coordinated budgets. Individual instructors cannot prepare budgets that require coordination across multiple classes. Only the department review committee, in conjunction with instructors for all relevant courses, can complete budget justification workbooks for individual instruction and shared facility course fees.

3) The instructor submits the budget justification workbook to the department course fee committee for review, along with the syllabus for the course. The amount and the intended use of the course fee must be disclosed on the top half of the first page of the syllabus.
4) Once approved by the department course fee committee, the department course fee POC submits the course fee request in Curriculog. The syllabus and the excel budget justification workbook should be uploaded to the Curriculog form.

5) The course fee proposal is reviewed and approved through the Curriculog process by the department head, financial officer, and dean.

6) The course fee proposal is reviewed by the USU Course Fee Committee. The Course Fee Committee will review available funds on the index or indices associated with the course fee, expenses on the course fee index, the syllabus, and the proposed excel budget justification workbook. As long as the course fee proposal aligns with course fee policy and practice, the Course Fee Committee may approve the course fee proposal.

7) The approved course fee is finalized in Curriculog, Banner, and the Course Catalog.

Roles of Department Course Fee Committee Members

**Department Head**

- Serves as Chair of the Department Course Fee Committee
- Selects committee members
- Reviews course fee budget justification workbooks submitted by instructors for course fee requests
- Ensures shared facilities and equipment costs are coordinated with all stakeholders involved
- Conducts annual review with the BSR of all department course fee indices to ensure:
  - Funds do not exceed or fall below + or -10% of expected revenue and do not accumulate in course fee accounts
  - Expenses match the approved uses for course fees as requested in Curriculog on proposals

**Business Services Representative**

Monthly responsibilities
- Reconciles every course fee index for allowable costs as specified in budget workbook and according to course fee policy. Makes necessary corrections as needed
- Monitors course fee indices’ available balances for reasonableness
- Each semester, provides financial reports to instructors. This should include revenues, expenses, and available balances

Yearly responsibilities
- Reports to the Department Course Fee Committee on excessive/deficit available balances and suggest raising or lowering the fee amounts accordingly
- Reviews the R&R indices to ensure enough money is being collected to cover future purchases of long-term equipment and/or computers
- Works with the Controller’s Office as needed to adjust fee percentage splits between “Operating” and R&R portions of a course fee
- Coordinates with department head, POC, and instructors on budgets of shared facilities/equipment

Course fee proposal responsibilities
❖ Works with department head to review course fee budget justification workbooks submitted by instructors. The BSR, in conjunction with the department head, ensures that budget justification workbooks align with course fee policy regarding use of student course fees
❖ Ensures that budget justifications align with other agreements for shared facilities or equipment and comply with R&R indices set up to monitor long-term costs
❖ Ensures that any new R&R indices that need to be requested for changes in course fees are set up

Department Course Fee Point-of-Contact (POC)
❖ Submits proposals, budget justification workbook, and syllabi in Curriculog
❖ Ensures the proposals get through the entire Curriculog approval process
❖ Makes corrections in Curriculog as needed if the proposal is rejected or requires an update
❖ Coordinates all corrections with the BSR, department head, and instructor(s)
❖ Coordinates with BSR on budgets of shared facilities/equipment

Note: Departments may choose to have more than one person help with collecting and uploading syllabi, uploading course fee budget justification workbooks, and entering proposals into Curriculog, but there should only be one POC in each department who will lead the team of individuals involved with Curriculog course fee proposal submissions.

Office of the Provost
❖ Provide guidance and training on Curriculog and the entire course fee proposal submission and approval process

Guidelines for Course Fees
Course fees may only be used for certain purposes, as outlined in University Policy 538. Course fees are used to enhance the educational experience when other funding support is inadequate or unavailable. Furniture such as shelving, chairs, tables, or parts of a room should be covered by department operating funds. Purchases that more broadly benefit the instructor of the course are not approvable, such as a personal computer or laptop, textbook for instructor, travel, parking, or a membership or certificate. Department heads and the business services representatives are familiar with course fee approval and use, so they should always be consulted by instructors preparing course fee budget justification workbooks.

Course fees should not be the first method for funding a course if other means are an option. In addition, there are differential tuition agreements with some colleges and departments that contain specific rules or limitations on course fee use for their programs.

Shared facilities or equipment
A shared facility might be a particular type of lab or facility unique to a department, such as a kitchen, an animal meat processing facility, a lab for specialized experiments, or a computer lab. Special equipment is unique to a lab or program – examples include a hydroponic pond pump, tractor, kiln, rotary cutter, or table saw.

Costs for facilities/equipment shared by students in more than one course should be coordinated between instructors teaching those courses and the department course fee committee. Course fees should be calculated based on hours of use by students in each course. Course fee requests submitted in
Curriculog for courses that use shared facilities or equipment should include a copy of the approved budget for the shared facilities/equipment. The course fee POC and Business Services representative should collaborate to ensure that all proposals that include shared facilities in the budgets align with the shared budget. BSRs and department heads should include an analysis of any shared budgets in their annual review of course fee indices.

Course fees cannot be used to maintain basic facilities, but can help fund special equipment for facilities. Departmental operating funds should be used to pay for the facility. It may be difficult to differentiate between a special facility and equipment in that facility if the equipment is integrated into the room. Questions on whether a course fee can pay for an item should be directed to the Associate Vice Provost over course fees.

**Repair and Replacement Costs covered by course fees**

Course fees must be used in the same semester they are paid. However, if there are items used for a course that have a useful life of greater than one year, a portion of the course fee can be set aside for future purchases. A Repair and Replacement index (R&R) should be set up to accrue funds to help cover long-term costs to repair or replace special equipment such as computers, microscopes, or tools. When setting up a budget, any long-term costs should be entered on the appropriate spreadsheet in the budget justification workbook. The budget should include the initial cost and useful life of each item. The long-term cost spreadsheet in the Excel course fee budget justification workbook can then automatically calculate the amount of course fees needed to cover future repair and replacement costs. Instructors should consult with the department BSR when developing a budget with long-term costs.

**Examples of items that CAN be covered by course fees:**

- Computers used by students
- Computer or electronic equipment used by students
- Printed materials developed for students within the course by the instructor (NOT textbooks)
- Computer software licenses for use by students
- Special equipment unique to the course
- Lab materials and supplies
- Tools
- Craft items
- Field trip costs such as entrance fees, van/transportation costs, parking costs
- Materials for projects made/used during the course
- TA or preceptor costs (this may change in the future)
- Testing costs if the course requires a particular paid test to an outside entity such as an FAA flight test
- Certification costs for students to obtain a license/certification as part of the course (must be required for all students)
- Parking fee for a guest lecturer

**Examples of items that course fees CANNOT cover:**

- Parts of a room or furniture
- Room or facility maintenance fees or safety/code inspections
- Food for students and instructor, unless specific to a field trip/activity where students cannot bring their own food
- Parking for instructor
- Personal laptop or computer for instructor
- Electronic equipment for instructor
Travel for instructor
Salaries or wages (Except for departments that entered into an MOU with the Provost’s Office where this may be permitted)
Office equipment
Textbooks
Gifts for instructors, guest lecturers, TAs, or Preceptors (use department funds)

**Online courses**
All online courses have a per-credit fee determined by AIS, not the department. The online course fee is not to be included as part of a course fee budget justification submitted by a department. If an online course requires materials/supplies given to all students or TAs to run the course, those items may be submitted as part of a budget for a course fee proposal. Those extra items will be a department course fee on top of the online per credit fee.