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 highly recommended that departments form a department course fee committee to manage their course fees. This committee should consist of at least these three 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. It is best that this annual review take place either at the end of the calendar year, or more ideally, at the end of the fiscal year (after June 30.)

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. Business Services staff should also ensure that any course fee expenses are labeled with enough information so that the reason for the expense is easily understood and in line with course fee policy.

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. The method for this initial step in the 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 course fee 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 and should not prepare their own budget for shared facilities or equipment that impact other courses using the shared facility or equipment because those budgets require coordination across multiple classes. Only the Business Services staff member, in conjunction with instructors for all relevant courses, can complete shared facility/laboratory/equipment budgets or budgets for individual instruction courses.
3) The instructor submits the completed course fee budget excel file 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 and the Business Services staff member completes financial information on that form. The syllabus and the excel budget justification workbook should be uploaded to the Curriculog form as part of the proposal.

5) The course fee proposal is reviewed and approved through the Curriculog process by the Business Services staff member, department head, 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 course fee budget. 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 for inappropriate expenses.
- 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 according to approved budgets.
- 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 instructors as needed to develop course fee budgets.
❖ Works with instructors for individual instruction courses to develop those course fee budgets (done at department level.)
❖ Works with instructors of courses that share a facility/laboratory/equipment to develop budgets and apportion shared costs across courses in a fair manner according to estimated use per course and per student.
❖ Fills out financial portions of course fee proposals in Curriculog.
❖ Works with department head to review course fee budgets submitted by instructors. The BSR, in conjunction with the department head, ensures that budgets align with course fee policy regarding use of student course fees.
❖ Ensures that budgets 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 are done through ServiceNow.
❖ Ensures that any new indices for new courses are requested through ServiceNow.

**Department Course Fee Point-of-Contact (POC)**

❖ Submits proposals, uploads course fee budgets, and uploads course syllabi with the course fee amount and use listed on the top half of the first page in Curriculog.
❖ Ensures the proposals move through the entire Curriculog approval process in a timely manner. Contact Michelle Smith with questions on proposals.
❖ Makes corrections in Curriculog as needed if the proposal is rejected or requires an edit.
❖ Coordinates all corrections with the BSR, department head, and instructor(s).
❖ Coordinates with BSR on budgets of course fees, shared facilities/equipment, and R&R indices.

**Note:** Departments may choose to have more than one person help with collecting and uploading syllabi, uploading course fee budgets, 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 the instructor, personal travel, parking, or a membership dues or certificate. Department heads and the business services representatives are familiar with course fee approval and use, so instructors preparing course fee budgets should always consult with the Business Services staff member.
NOTE: 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. This budget is developed by the Business Services staff member and instructors involved with use of the facility/equipment.

The course fee POC and Business Services representative should collaborate to ensure that all course fee 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.

NOTE: Course fees cannot be used to maintain basic elements of facilities like laboratories or kitchens (for example, course fees cannot pay for Facilities’ charges, furniture, office equipment, or parts of the room), but course fees can help fund special equipment for facilities. Departmental operating funds should be used to pay for the facility itself. 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 budget template 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
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:
TA or Preceptor Costs (per new USHE policy on course fees)
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.