



How to Fill Out an Academic Special Course Fee Request

Part 1.

- Fill out all blanks, unless they do not apply.
 - Be sure to choose whether the fee is “new” or “existing.”
1. Statement of Justification: Answer the following questions:
 - a. New Fee
 - i. How is the cost currently covered?
 - ii. Why are department fees not being utilized?
 - b. Existing Fee
 - i. How would you cover costs if the fee is not approved?
 - c. In the justification, include information on needed items. For instance, a biology justification might state:
 - i. Fees are needed for biological supplies and reagents. These will be used to collect samples from the air, water, and soil. Without these fees, students will not be able to gain the skills to collect and assess in real world settings.

Part 2.

- Fill out the cost table, including headcount, fee per student, and total fee revenue.
- Under “Expenditures”, provide a list of some of the supplies that will be purchased, under the “Other” category.
 - For example, a nursing course fee might be used for medical gloves, disposable tips for thermometers (but not the thermometer itself), and other disposable items.

Academic Course Fees May be Used For:

- Supplemental course material fees
- Disposable/single-use items (gloves, reagents, masks, safety equipment)
- Art materials
- Simulated healthcare patients
- Cost of professional examination/certification

Academic Course Fees May Not be Used For:

- Salaries, wages, employee benefits
- Capital equipment
- Reusable items (i.e. a thermometer in the Nursing Simulation Center)
- Operating expenses/overhead
- Textbooks (at GCSU)

See next page for more information.

24.3.2 Elective Student Fees

(Last Modified on June 1, 2023)

Elective fees, unlike mandatory fees, generally only apply selectively to students based on the purpose of the fee(s). The purpose of assessing an elective fee is to fund specific, unique costs that are the result of an action, election, or decision made by the student. Elective fees are not intended to supplement general educational activities inherent in the instruction of students. Nor are they a way to supplant state appropriations or tuition dollars. Expenditures of elective fee revenues should be aligned with the costs created by the action, election, or decision that prompted the assessment of the fee.

Section 7.3.2.2 of the BOR Policy Manual provides that institution presidents are authorized to approve elective fees. However, the Policy Manual provides the following exceptions to presidential authority to exclusively approve elective fees:

- “Any fee or special charge that is required to be paid by any standard subgroup of students based on grade level or previous credit hours earned shall undergo the same approval process as mandatory fees.” This means the fee must be reviewed and voted on by a student fee committee, be submitted with the level of documentation required of mandatory fees, and be approved by the Board of Regents annually. An example would be a fee charged to all freshman or all students with less than 90 credit hours earned; and
- “Any elective fee or special charge that is required to be paid by all students in a specific degree program or in a specific course, with the exception of laboratory fees and supplemental course material fees shall be approved by the Board, but shall not require review by a student fee committee.” Fees falling under this exception to presidential authority are discussed in the Other Course/Degree Program Fees section below.

Some common types of elective fees are housing fees, food service fees, and supplemental material course fees. Elective fees and special charges are reviewed on an annual basis to determine use, effectiveness and appropriateness for continuation....

... Supplemental Course Material Fees

As defined in Policy 7.3.2.2, supplemental course material fees are assessed “to cover specific costs, such as art materials, course packets/kits, museum admissions, travel to off-campus learning sites, safety equipment, software/videos, and special equipment.” Another common example is the cost of a professional examination/certification, required as a part of the class, and procured by the institution under a group purchase. These fees should be essentially pass-through, assessed with a very strict focus, in a limited manner, and should have the following features:

- The material or service is integral to the course in order for each student to reach the intended learning objectives.
- The student can easily identify the direct benefit he or she is receiving from the fee.
- The fee rate is equivalent to or lower than what the student would expect to pay for the material or service if purchasing independently at market price.
- Upon an in-depth review of the fee, the revenue received from the fee would directly align with the institution’s expenditures on the material or service provided.

In very limited cases, these fees may be used to fund the provision of services, such as tutoring. However, in keeping with the guidance above, the tutoring sessions should be considered an integral or required component of the class, the tutoring services should be obtained for the specific course for which the fee is assessed, and the payment to the tutor should align with the fee revenue. Supplemental course material fees may not be assessed for purposes of general student support services, course development, salaries, travel or other intangible costs.

The costs for textbooks may be included in supplemental course material fees in limited circumstances. Specifically, course fees may be used to cover the cost of textbooks when provided through an “inclusive access” program that is administered by the institution. Such programs MUST have “opt out” provisions that are well advertised to all students, including prior to registration. Additionally, all textbooks provided by “inclusive access” programs must be offered to students at prices that are demonstrably less than market rates for purchasing the materials separately. Faculty should be encouraged to first explore open educational resources that may be available at no cost.

Supplemental course material fees must be accounted for as either Other General Funds (Fund 10600) or Auxiliary Bookstore Funds (Fund 12230).

Laboratory Fees

Students in a course with a laboratory component, or those designated as a stand-alone laboratory course, will actively use equipment and materials in a direct manner to enhance practical skills or understanding of a concept. Labs are most typically a component of courses in a natural or physical science, but may also include design, the arts, etc. Laboratory fees may be assessed in these courses to cover the cost of supplies, materials, and services utilized by students in a lab. The lab must be specific to a course and attendance required as a part of the course. Lab fees for general learning centers maintained to provide optional tutoring or extra practice are not allowable.

Lab fees are similar to supplemental course material fees, in that they are used to fund the purchase of specific provisions for student use in the lab. Due to the nature of a lab environment, there are often times that the materials and supplies consumed are reusable. Because of this, it is not a requirement of lab fees that the cost to the student match exactly the material that the student receives. An example of this is a chemistry lab, where equipment can be reused (if not damaged) and chemicals are purchased in bulk. Institutions are required to analyze expenditure patterns for laboratory costs and set the lab fee rate equal to the revenue needed to cover these expenditures.

Lab fees may be used for student lab assistants, but may only cover the time spent attending to that specific lab. They are not intended to fund instructor or staff salaries, capital equipment, or staffing of a tutoring facility or general learning center, which should be funded through general operating budgets. Lab fees must be accounted for as Other General Funds (Fund 10600 for GeorgiaFirst institutions).