

# **RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY COURSE FEE POLICY**

**Policy Name:** Course Fee Policy

**Adopted:** June 25, 2018

**Approval Authority:** Vice President, Finance and Budget

**Responsible Executive:** Director, Budget Policy & Analysis

**Responsible Office:** University Budget Office

**Contact:** Director, Budget Policy & Analysis (848-932-7725)

## **1. Policy Statement**

This policy establishes guidelines for the approval and assessment of course fees to ensure that any such fees charged to students are fair and appropriate. The policy applies strictly to course fees and does not apply to other types of student fees levied by the university.

## **2. Reason for Policy**

An official university-wide policy is critical to maintaining consistency, legitimacy, and transparency in the use of course fees.

## **3. Who Should Read this Policy?**

All students and faculty should be aware of this policy. Also, any administrators involved in the course fee approval process – department chairs, deans, and chancellors, among others – as well as budget and student accounting staff should have a solid understanding of the contents of this policy.

## **4. Resources**

Student Accounting, Billing, and Cashier Services – Tuition and Fees:

<https://www.studentabc.rutgers.edu/tuition-fees/tuition-and-fees-0>

## 5. The Policy

### Definition and appropriate use of course fees

A course fee is a charge triggered by enrollment in a particular course and levied to cover the additional costs, above and beyond the general expenditures necessary for classroom and laboratory instruction, of consumable materials, equipment for personal use, certain specialized equipment for shared use, or other items or services essential for participation in that course.

Examples of appropriate uses of course fees include, but are not limited to:

- (1) Consumable materials, such as:
  - a. art supplies
  - b. chemistry kits
- (2) Personal equipment for course use, such as:
  - a. protective eyewear
  - b. exam gloves
- (3) Shared specialized equipment particular to a specific course or type of course, such as:
  - a. robotics equipment
  - b. cameras and related equipment for filmmaking courses
- (4) Required admission and travel expenses for students to visit off-campus sites
- (5) Non-instructional services provided by third-parties, such as:
  - a. models for drawing classes
  - b. musical accompanists
  - c. standardized patients for nursing training
- (6) Named-user software.

In general, course fees should not be assessed to cover the costs of materials related to the mechanics of teaching a course, such as the printing or photocopying of course outlines, syllabi, exams, and similar handouts, or for the costs of construction, maintenance, renovation, or the basic operation of classroom and laboratory facilities. Course fees are also not to be used to cover the costs of instructional personnel – professors, lecturers, teaching assistants, tutors, etc. – but may be used, with appropriate approvals, for supplemental course-related services provided by third-party individuals or organizations.

In the case of shared specialized equipment, in limited circumstances course fees may be used across various course sections and over multiple semesters to cover the amortized costs of the purchase, maintenance and repair of such items. Course fees may not, however, be used to cover costs related to non-specialized items such as chairs, desks, audio-visual equipment, etc.

Course fees may be charged to students only through the term bill. Fees may not be assessed or collected outside of the regular billing process conducted by the office of

student accounting. In the event of a student's withdrawal from a course, there will be no refunds of course fees after the add/drop period.

### Procedure for requesting and approving course fees

For new course fees or for changes to an existing fee, an academic department must submit a course fee request form to the dean of the school for approval. The request form will include a written justification of the proposed fee along with a budget for the use of such funds. The dean's review shall consider both the fiscal and pedagogical aspects of the fee proposal. If approved by the dean, the course fee request form will be forwarded to the chancellor for final consideration.

It will be the responsibility of the chancellor's office to maintain a record of all approved course fees. Prior to each semester, including summer/winter sessions, a list of approved course fees will be provided by the chancellor's office to the office of student accounting, with a copy to the university budget office, for inclusion in the student billing process.

Each year, a set of course fee review/approval dates will be developed by the chancellor's office, in conjunction with the office of student accounting. As mentioned above, a list of approved course fees must be presented to student accounting from the chancellor's office in sufficient time for billing prior to the start of each semester and summer/winter session. The student accounting office will provide the chancellors with deadlines for the submission of such course fee lists, updated annually.

Note that a new course fee request form, including a budget for spending fee revenue, is only required for new course fees or for revisions to existing course fees, such as increases or decreases in rates, changes to the items being purchased, etc. Previously-approved course fees may be included in the chancellor's semester/session list of approved charges without the submission of a new request form. Each chancellor's office, however, shall designate a period, of no more than five years, after which time a course fee approval is no longer valid and the entire course fee approval process must be repeated if further use of that fee is desired.

In order to allow for a thorough examination of all existing course fees (i.e., those in use during the 2017-18 fiscal year), chancellors may elect to phase in the review of such fees in their areas over a multi-year period. At a minimum, at least one-fourth of all existing course fees must undergo the course fee approval process in each chancellor area by the end of FY 2019. If necessary, another one-fourth of the existing course fees shall be reviewed before the end of FY 2020, with another one-fourth before the end of FY 2021, and the final one-fourth to be examined no later than the conclusion of FY 2022. All requests for new course fees or for increases to existing course fees must go through the full approval process without delay.

### Reporting of course fee funds collected, expenditures made, and disposition of balances

All course fee funds shall be recorded under fund type 100, with all expenses being recorded in the same chart string using the appropriate natural accounts. At the end of each fiscal year, the dean's office shall prepare a course fee report summarizing the use of course fees in their area of supervision over the prior twelve months, including a tally of revenues, expenditures, and balances on a course-by-course basis. Such reports shall be submitted to the chancellor for review, with copies to the university budget office.

In the event that a small balance remains at the end of a session or semester, such course fee funds may be rolled forward for future use by the department or school, pursuant to guidance from the chancellor's office. Similarly, if a sinking fund for repair or replacement costs has been approved and established, such course fee dollars may also be rolled forward. In the case of unexpected large balances or other special circumstances, as determined by the chancellor, such funds may be designated by the chancellor for any instruction-related, non-personnel expenses. It is anticipated, however, that any unexpected large balances will trigger an immediate, in-depth review and possible reduction of the fee amount going forward.

### Documentation requirements

Each chancellor's office will be responsible for maintaining records regarding the approval and use of all course fees within their areas of supervision. Such records are to be maintained in accordance with university records management policy.

Both the dean's office, through the course registration process, and the office of student accounting, through its website and the billing process, shall be responsible for publicizing course fees to ensure that students are aware of such charges in as timely a manner as possible. In addition, a link to this course fee policy shall be posted with other tuition and fee information on the student accounting website.

### Implementation date

The guidelines and procedures set forth in this policy shall go into effect on July 1, 2018.

Approved by:

Kathy L. Dettloff  
Vice President, Finance and Budget  
June 25, 2018