Course Fee Guidelines

Fees for credit-bearing academic courses require approval from SUNY. Requests must include documentation and justification of the need for the charges and a budget for the funds accruing from the fee.

Any changes to course number or course additions to an existing fee must be formally communicated to the Accounting office with approval letters from department Chair, Dean and Provost Offices (see required approval letters below). All changes or additions must be approved by SUNY before charging the fee.

All new fees and increases to existing fees must be reviewed with the department’s VP Coordinator before submission to Accounting.

The due dates for course fee submission to Accounting Office are:
- Fall – February 1
- Spring – July 1
- Summer – January 1
- Winter – June 1

Factors that allow for a course fee are one or more of the following (per SUNY’s current fee policy 7804):

- Special course supplies and materials where the student retains an end product from the coursework (i.e., sculpture, ceramics, media portfolios).
- Costs where there is a significant savings per student due to volume purchasing.
- Items not available to the general public (i.e., access to testing or learning items, professional grade materials), and certifications.
- Extraordinary costs which includes maintenance or purchase of specialized equipment, testing or certification fees, clinical and practicum activities, supplies and materials not commonly available at local merchants or campus bookstore.
- Special services (i.e., music instrument rental, private lessons)
- Scientific chemicals, gases, and materials
- Dental instrumentation
- Proper disposal of laboratory waste
- Travel to off campus sites

The guidelines to course fee submissions are as follows, but are not limited to:

- Each fee requires a separate budget template (see below attachment). IFR accounts should be separate for each fee or subbed out for ease of tracking/audit purposes.
- Multiple courses with the same fee can use one template and one IFR account as long as expenses are shared equally among all courses.
- If costs are not shared equally among multiple courses, separate fees may be needed. Complete a separate budget template for each fee.
- Provide course numbers with titles.
- Projection of enrollment revenue and expenses - Existing fees should use actual enrollment as basis for revenue projection and actual expenses as basis for expense projections.
- Some unallowable costs identified in Circular A-21, Section J by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) are alcoholic beverages, bad debt, personal use of organization-funded automobile, unreasonable reimbursement for travel expenses, cost of entertainment, etc. For more details, see the attachment under References.
• PSR cannot include instruction. Instruction includes, but is not limited to preparation and administration of course related materials by faculty, staff, technicians, Gas, TAs, office supplies and equipment.
• PSR cannot include technology services
• PSR must include line numbers for staff and how the cost is determined, with calculations.
• Fees are not permitted for routine materials, textbooks and items commonly available to students at local merchants or the campus bookstore.
• Inclusion of account deficit to increase the fee is not permitted.
• Expense projections should have detailed support, broken down by categories/type of expense (example for Supplies: Gases-$1,000, Acids-$500, Widgets-$850)
• Supplementary documents to support expenses must include detailed calculations to justify cost.
• Are expenses or equipment shared with other labs? If yes, there is a need to allocate/breakdown across the number of labs. If expenses are not shared equally, separate fees may be needed. Complete a separate budget template for each fee.
• Purchase Orders are required for items over $2,000 (ex. maintenance agreements, equipment).
• Equipment cost needs to be broken down and depreciated over its useful life. A comprehensive schedule should be provided as support, including Purchase Order numbers.
• For number of years useful life of equipment contact Property Control.
• If cost is associated with each student building a project, a detailed breakdown of expenses to build one unit is required. Documentation supporting the unit costs are required (PO, quote, contract, or invoice).
• Result of revenue less expenses should not be a surplus.
• Cash balance for existing IFR accounts - a surplus should not remain in course fee accounts. Surplus due to timing of invoices to be paid is acceptable if the expense is for prior semesters. Support must be provided (ex. Invoices, POs, quotes, etc)
• An explanation to justify the need for each fee must be provided. This may be on dept letterhead, signed by the Chair.
• Justification must include if:
  o Course is required for graduation/completion of a degree or if it is an elective.
  o There is a tangible end-product that is retained by student at end of course.
  o There is a significant savings for student and how much savings per student.
• Based on the nature of the course fee request, additional information may be required.

Required documentation

• SUNY Budget Template (Course Fee Request Template)
• All supporting details for each expense item in SUNY Budget Template
• Course number with title and course description
• Upon finalization of the review with Accounting, the following approval letters are required on department letterhead with approver’s title in signatory area:
  o Letter from Chair to Dean explaining the need for the fee.
  o Letter from Dean to Provost or other requesting Office approving and endorsing the need for the fee.
  o Letter from Provost or other requesting Office to University Controller approving and endorsing the need for the fee.

Course Fee IFR accounts will be reviewed every two years to justify continuation of the fee. Expenditures related to the course fee must be charged to the associated IFR to offset the revenue generated by the fee. Only approved costs for the SUNY approved fee should be charged to the course fee IFR account.
References
Fee policy no. 7804 (section B under Chancellor Authorized fees) on credit bearing courses for guidance on allowable costs, etc. http://www.suny.edu/sunypp/documents.cfm?doc_id=398

SUNY Budget Template (Course Fee Request Template)

Template.xlsx Unallowable Cost A-21