



Policy Title	Establishing or Changing an Elective Fee or Special Charges
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Responsible Office	Vice President for Operations and Chief Information Officer/ Chief Business Officer
Contact Information	Office of Budget and Planning Phone: (770) 499-3293 Email: dgamadan@kennesaw.edu

1. Policy Purpose Statement

The purpose of this policy is to:

- provide a consistent approach to approval and treatment of fees at Kennesaw State University (KSU or the University);
- provide clear documentation for purposes/specific uses of fees;
- ensure that student elective fee expenditures are in line with their documented purpose and directly benefit the students who paid the fees;
- outline a method for annual monitoring of fees for inactivity, applicability, and/or accumulating balances.

2. Background

In general, KSU departments are expected to cover normal instructional costs within their operation budgets, and elective fees and other charges should be added only in exceptional situations. The financial needs of the department must be weighed against the impact of the fees on students and also the costs of administering the fees (assessment and collection).

This policy updates and combines the former “Establishing Of, or Change In, Course Fee” and “Establishing or Changing Elective Fee” policies and incorporates changes made by the Board of Regents (BOR) of the University System of Georgia (USG) on February 11, 2015.

3. Scope (What is Affected)

The following are examples of what may be funded through elective fees and special charges:

- Cost of providing course materials to be consumed, retained, or used by the student;
- Cost of other materials or services necessary to provide a special supplemental educational experience of direct benefit to the student;
- Transcript fees.

4. Exclusions or Exceptions

This policy specifically excludes the following cost items to be paid through fees:

- salaries, wages, and employee benefits of support personnel (including honoraria);
- furniture or equipment for faculty or staff offices;
- workshops, conferences or seminars, and related travel where a majority of attendance consists of KSU faculty or staff;
- reproduction of copyrighted materials;
- course syllabi; and
- course development.

5. Definitions and Acronyms

Housing Fees: Fees paid by students who live in institutional residential facilities. All housing fees, except for housing fees that are proposed to support debt service and operating costs on new housing projects funded with private funds, shall be approved by the institution president in April of each year. The housing fees that support debt service shall be approved by the Board (BOR Minutes, January 2010). Each institution shall notify the chancellor annually of all institutionally-approved housing fees (BOR Minutes, February 2007; January 2010).

Food Service Fees: Fees paid by students who elect to choose an institutional food service plan. Food service fees assessed to all undergraduate students, all full-time undergraduate students, or any standard subgroup of students based on grade level or previous credit hours earned are not considered an elective fee and must be approved by the Board as a mandatory fee. This includes food service fees due prior to registration that may be refunded later in the semester and food service fees for which the student received a cash equivalent in the amount of the fee. All elective food service fees and those required for residential students shall be approved by the institution president in April of each year. All food service fees that support debt service shall be approved by the Board. Each institution shall notify the chancellor annually of all institutionally-approved food service fees (BOR Minutes, January 2010).

Other Elective Fees and Special Charges: Fees and charges that are paid selectively by students. These fees and charges may include, but are not limited to:

- Resident hall deposits;
- Penalty charges;
- Non-mandatory parking fees and parking fines;
- Library fines;
- Laboratory fees;
- Post office box rentals; and
- Supplemental course material fees 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.

Institutional presidents are authorized to establish and adjust these fees, as appropriate. Prior to implementation of such fees, institutions shall be required to report to the chancellor any establishments and adjustments made thereto under procedures established by the USG chief fiscal officer (BOR Minutes, January 2010).

6. Policy

Fees must be used to augment, rather than replace, general budgeted funds for departmental instructional costs. Increases in these fees should be kept moderate and gradual.

Establishment of New Elective Fees and Special Charges

BOR/USG policy authorizes institution presidents to approve elective fees and special charges. However, 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. 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 (BOR Minutes, February 11, 2015). The KSU president delegates authority to approve elective fees and special charges as stated below.

- a. Undergraduate course fees require approval by the provost and the President's Cabinet.
- b. Graduate course fees require approval by the provost and the chief business officer (CBO).

Requests that also require BOR approval will be submitted to the BOR after all KSU institutional approvals have been obtained.

Procedure Steps

1. Complete the appropriate KSU Elective Fee Request Form.
2. Obtain required approvals.
3. Submit form to the Office of Budget and Planning (OBP).

The Office of the Provost, OBP, and the bursar in the Office of Finance and Accounting (OFA) are responsible for applying the policy and ensuring adequate campus oversight of all fees. This responsibility includes review of fee proposals, review of the costing and proposed fee levels, and the appropriate distribution of collected fees.

The requesting department manager has primary responsibility to ensure that fee-related expenditures are appropriate and incurred as per the intended purpose of the fee and, specifically in the case of course fees, that there is a benefit to the student.

Additionally, the college/unit business manager should also review related expenditures to ensure that they are in agreement with the intended purpose of the fee. When direct benefit to the student is not apparent per the invoice submitted for payment, supporting documentation should be added as backup to the payment request.

All documentation for new fee requests or fee changes will be held by the OBP. All student fees will be properly documented, approved, and monitored annually for inactivity, applicability, and accumulating balances. Adjustments will be made for fees that are inactive, no longer applicable, or have excessive balances.

Requests are reviewed once a year in December for the subsequent fiscal year beginning fall semester.

When proposing new fees, departments must adhere to the following guidelines:

- Departments must apply a test of reasonableness to ensure that funding has not already been provided to the department or school through other fund sources, such as current

state or tuition funds.

- Guidelines for the types of items that may be included in the fee are listed above under “Policy.” Only direct costs (not overhead/indirect costs) may be included in the computation of the fee, and departments must fully and accurately document the cost of supplies, consumables, and support services associated with each elective fee.
- Each proposed fee must provide specific cost information.
- If equipment is an intended use of the fee, the cost of the equipment must be allocated over its useful life in the determination of the fee amount and cannot be fully recouped in the year of acquisition. For the calculation of course materials fees, equipment is considered to be tangible property having a useful life of more than one year.
- The elective fee expenditures must be appropriate and directly benefit the students who paid the fee.

Requests for Elective Fee Increase/Decrease

Requests for increases in approved elective fees will follow the same procedures and policies as those for the establishment of new fees. Requests for elimination or decreases of existing elective fees, or application of the fee following a minor change in the course number or description, will be handled administratively by the appropriate college/unit. Notification should be sent to OBP when fees are reduced or eliminated.

7. Associated Policies and Regulations

- a. [BOR Policy Manual, Section 7.3.2.2 Elective Fees and Special Charges](#)

8. Associated Procedures

None.

9. Associated Forms

- a. [Budget Elective Fee Request Form](#)

10. Violations

Individuals and KSU employees in violation of this policy are subject to a range of sanctions, including but not limited to disciplinary action, dismissal from the University, and/or legal action.

11. Review Schedule

The Establishing or Changing an Elective Fee or Special Charges Policy is reviewed annually by the Office of Budget and Planning.