Physical & Biological Sciences

Divisional Guidelines for Course Materials Funding

Both Course Fee revenue and Course Materials allocations are funding sources available to Departments to cover the exceptional expenses (e.g., materials, travel) necessary to provide a special supplemental educational experience of direct benefit to enrolled students of specific courses. Other sources that may be available to cover these costs include operating budgets, Summer Session revenue share funds, and gifts or endowments.

This document provides the process for requesting Course Material funding. This document is a companion document to the Divisional Guidelines for Course Fees.

1. Campus Policy Context

Through the end of 2020-21, the primary funding available for a Department to cover exceptional costs of specific courses was through Course Fee revenue (from fees charged to students enrolled in the course), department operating budgets, and gift/endowment funds.

Effective in 2021-2022, the Chancellor implemented changes to the campus Course Fee policy that limits the establishment of Course Fees, and eliminated already existing approved Course Fees for many courses in the Division. The Chancellor replaced the loss of this revenue source with the Course Materials funding that is allocated to the Division. Per the Chancellor, Course Materials allocations provide funding for exceptional instructional expenses where a course is:

- Ineligible for Course Fees because (a) cost per student is less than $100, and/or (b) the course is a primary Lecture course.
- Has not been approved by the Chancellor to charge a Course Fee to students.

2. Definitions

Course Fee - Fees charged to students to recover the costs of materials, supplies, equipment, and support services not covered by the normal instructional budget. Approval authority is at the Chancellor level, after review and recommendation by the Miscellaneous and Course Fee Advisory Committee (MCFAC).

Course Materials Funding – Funding provided by the central campus to academic divisions based on enrollments and classification of For-credit courses.

3. Allowable Uses; Restrictions

Course Materials funding may be used to cover exceptional student expenses (e.g., materials, travel) necessary to provide a **special supplemental educational experience of direct benefit to enrolled students of an eligible course:**

- Materials and Supplies including such items as chemicals, solutions, gloves, filters, biological specimens, artists' media, glassware, photographic chemicals, and other one-time use items. These also may include the reproduction costs for supplemental non-copyrighted materials such as laboratory manuals and noncommercial computer software.
- Tools and equipment including scientific or medical tools, musical instruments, video and audio equipment, and other equipment related to enrollment in a course, so long as the student is given ownership (if purchased) or extensive use (if rented) of the tools or equipment and, where feasible, has the option of securing equivalent tools or equipment elsewhere. These may include the costs associated with the use of University-owned tools and equipment for out-of-class learning activities or extracurricular use, or the purchase of computer software if the student retains ownership of the software.
- Materials and services for special supplemental educational experiences are materials and services that offer students a special educational opportunity, such as travel, lodging and food costs for field work as required by the course.

Course Materials funding may **not** be used to cover expenses associated with the following:

- Expenses that support faculty or staff (including Teaching Assistants) when a course is offered off campus (e.g., airfare, other transportation, or food and lodging); salaries/benefits of University employees; honoraria, including the cost for guest lecturers as part of a course.
- Maintenance, depreciation, replacement of instructional equipment; equipment used to enhance the division/department; divisional/departmental computer upgrades.
- Course syllabi or reproduction of any materials that do not provide a special supplemental educational experience of direct benefit to the student; reproduction of copyrighted materials or audio or video collections.
- Computer software or licenses that enhance divisional/departmental property; software license costs (unless licenses are assigned to each student and may only be used for the course offering for which they are purchased).

4. Eligible Courses

For-credit courses offered by PBSci departments that are categorized as Field (FLD), Laboratory (LAB), Lecture (LEC), Studio (STU) in AIS are eligible for Course Materials funding. A cross-listed course that fits any of these categorizations and where a majority of enrollments fall under a PBSci Department is eligible for Course Materials funding.

The following are scenarios where a course would be considered ineligible for Course Materials funding from the Division:

- A seminar or independent study-type course.
- A course offered by a PBSci faculty through a non-PBSci department or unit.
- Any cross-listed course where a majority of enrollments fall under a Course Sponsoring Agency outside of the Division (e.g., Environmental Studies, Biomolecular Engineering).

5. Annual Reporting

In late Fall/early Winter, Departments will provide prior year enrollment and expense information for courses that received funding to the Division, in tandem with providing information for Course Fee Year-End Reports.

Depending on availability of funding, the Division may have the Department move forward with a Course Fee proposal for any eligible course[1] with strong evidence of cost per student exceeding the threshold of $100.

6. Related Information

Course Fees: Establishment and Budgetary Review

Divisional Guidelines for Course Fees

7. Frequently Asked Questions

Can a Department request funding for just one offering of a course, because the instructor for a specific offering is planning a field trip?

It is encouraged to submit requests for one-time funds in cases where allowable expenses may fluctuate between years, and therefore are problematic due to surplus and deficit expectations associated with Course Fee revenue.

Can a Department request partial funding for a course, to match with other departmental funds in order to waive Course Fees to students and increase access?

Yes, in fact it is encouraged to submit requests for one-time funds in cases where allowable expenses may fluctuate between years, and therefore are problematic due to surplus and deficit expectations associated with Course Fee revenue.

Can a Department pay for the costs of making copies of scientific papers being assigned for reading with Course Materials funding?

No, Course Materials funding has the same restrictions as Course Fee revenue and can only be used for exceptional expenses necessary to provide a special supplemental educational experience of direct benefit to enrolled students of specific courses. In addition, reproducing copyrighted material is not allowed.

Can a Department pay for the costs of demonstration equipment or equipment that is used by students in more than one course?

[1] Per the Chancellor, Course Fees charged to students are only be allowable for For-credit Laboratory (LAB), Primary field (FLD), Studio (STU) for-credit courses (as identified in AIS) with materials or costs appropriate per the Campus Course Fee Guidelines that equal or exceed $100 per enrolled student.

No, Course Materials funding has the same restrictions as Course Fee revenue, and such costs are not of direct benefit to enrolled students of a specific course. Departments may use Instructional Equipment Replacement funds for these purposes, or other available fungible sources.

12/5/23; ml. Updated to reflect change to allocation process (budget allocation replacing reimbursement methodology) and other minor revisions.
10/2/25; ml. Updated to remove the section on request process. Preliminary allocations are communicated in Winter
7/1/26; ml. Removed forms section.