

Off-Cycle Fee Request and Approval Guidelines

Introduction

The Board of Regents reserves the right to approve all tuition and fee rates. The Board reviews and approves tuition and fee rates as part of the President's proposed operating budget, which is submitted to the Board in May or June for the following fiscal year. Rates are effective with the start of fall semester, and apply through fall, spring, and the next summer. The standard cycle is for fees to be submitted by University departments to University Budget and Finance for review in time to be included in the operating budget presented to the Board. Requests for fee changes or new fees submitted after the Board approves the budget are considered "off-cycle."

Principles & Process

The following principles apply to the submission, review, and approval of fees submitted off-cycle:

1. The ability to provide the student with an accurate account is paramount. Students should receive a complete and accurate tuition and fee statement on their first bill of the semester. Ideally, fee information should be published much earlier.
2. Approval of off-cycle fee additions or changes is a two-step process. First, the University Budget and Finance reviews the fee for technical correctness and consistency with the approved budget and recommends action to the Office of the Provost. The Office of the Provost reviews for academic merit, student impact, and other policy considerations. Both steps include consideration of the following:
 - a. Does the fee meet the requirements of current Board policy?
 - b. Does the fee meet the evaluation standards used by leadership for fees in the current fiscal year cycle (e.g., was there a cap on growth of certain fees in the current year)?
 - c. Is there a good and legitimate reason the fee request could not be submitted during the regular budget process?
 - d. How many students will be affected by this change?
 - e. Is the change financially material to the success of the course, department, and college?
3. Collegiate fees and student service fees will not be changed off-cycle. The rate approved by the Regents as part of the operating budget (in the printed document) will be the rate implemented for the fiscal year, even if that rate does not match the expectations of the submitting unit. Any changes to these fees will require additional Board approval.
4. Durable goods fees and administrative fees that affect large numbers of students will rarely be changed off-cycle.
5. Course fees will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, with consideration of the following:
 - a. *Changes requested before student award packaging and processing* (about 10 days before the start of school) that meet all other requirements of administrative and Regents policies are most likely to be approved.
 - b. *Changes requested before the first student billing* (the weekend before the first week of class) that meet all other requirements of administrative and Regents policies may also be approved, with the instructor and/or department responsible for communicating the change to students.

Off-Cycle Fee Request and Approval Guidelines

- c. *Changes requested after the first student billing, but before the bill is due* (roughly 2 weeks after billing) are less likely to be approved. Fee errors discovered at this point must be material in nature for a change to the fee to be considered. Fee changes that generate less than \$1000 in revenue will normally be deemed not material, and changes will not be approved. Units are expected to use departmental or collegiate balances to cover costs during the current year rather than inconvenience students and increase administrative costs. A fee request denied for this reason may be resubmitted during the standard fee submission cycle for the following year.
 - d. *Changes requested after the due date for the first billing* are likely to be denied. Both the department and the college must show significant academic hardship for change to be approved.
 - e. The instructor and department must communicate to students any changes that are approved that result in a change to the student's bill.
6. The Tuition & Fee Management System (TFMS) will be used to submit and track off-cycle fee requests:
- a. In addition to the justification and approvals required for all fees, the justification for off-cycle submissions should include a reason for the late submission.
 - b. The e-mail feature of TFMS should be used to inform the next person in the routing chain that a request is pending. The next step of the review will not be triggered unless the reviewer receives notification.** When changing the status to Ready for OBF, select the Off-Cycle Budget Officers option in the list of e-mail recipients.
 - c. The fee is fully approved when it has a status of "Ready for SFIT." Fee setup is complete when the fee has a status of "Ready for PeopleSoft" (charges billed through tuition calculation) or "Fit for Use" (charges posted by the department or received by the department).
 - d. Departments should communicate the fee change to the student when the fee has a status of "Ready for SFIT" so that students are informed before the charge is posted to their account.
7. Personnel who have been delegated responsibility for review and approval of off-cycle fee requests are:
- a. On behalf of University Budget and Finance – Emily Larson (e-lars@umn.edu)
 - b. On behalf of the Office of the Provost – Suzanne Bardouche (bardouch@umn.edu)