

SCHOOL OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND FOREST SCIENCES COURSE FEE PROCESS

BACKGROUND

The School of Environmental and Forest Sciences supports its course offerings by providing salaries and benefits to faculty, staff, teaching assistants, and reader graders. SEFS also supports courses by providing laptop computers and digital projectors for instructional use along with basic field equipment that is available for check-out, paying for standard test Scorepaks and Course Evaluations, routine copying, and paying speaker parking. Instructional activities include classroom teaching, preparing and typing of examinations and instructional materials, and grading examinations and assignments. The School of Environmental and Forest Sciences has a long history of providing hands-on courses both in the laboratory and in the field. The additional expenses related to these courses are beyond the level of a regular classroom course and are covered by course fees, which are additional charges to students that are intended to pay for specific course-related costs. According to APS 33.1, fees charged to University employees and students must be set to recover **not more** than the cost of the goods or services provided, including applicable departmental and University-wide overhead costs. SEFS adheres to this principle. Long ago we requested and received an overhead exemption for our course fee budget. Therefore no overhead is passed on to students for their course fees.

In 2006 the Office of the Chair of the faculty of the College of Forest Resources began a review of course fees charged for courses offered by SEFS. Initially a Course Fee Form was sent to faculty so they could document the expenses for their courses. This form helped to determine the types of expenses incurred, but did not facilitate determining the estimated cost of each course or the cost per student. In 2007 a budget spreadsheet was developed for each course charging course fees, which includes the estimated expenses for each individual course. Each quarter the faculty who are teaching courses that have fees are asked to review their course's spreadsheet and revise as necessary to reflect any changes.

Presently, SEFS offers many laboratory or field courses requiring course fees. These fees continue to be based on the principles outlined in APS 33.1 as described above.

If a fee is being lowered from what was originally set, the registrar's office does not require approval. For fees that are increased, approval is necessary. SEFS follows standard procedure for the approval process.

APPROACH

Course fees for SEFS courses are established using the principles laid out in UW Administrative Policy Statement 33.1, most notably:

- Course fees are additional charges to students that are intended to pay for specified course-related costs.
- Course fees may be used for materials, supplies, and equipment, as well as non-personnel costs associated with field trips, technology, and related costs of set-up, maintenance, and cleaning for materials, supplies, and equipment.

- Course fees may be used for tangible resources that are utilized to different degrees in multiple courses (for example, the slide collection in the Art Department).
- Course fees may be used for personnel costs other than faculty and teaching assistant time that are related to a particular course offering (for example, part of the cost of a laboratory technician supporting a chemistry lab could be recovered through a course fee).
- Course fees may not be used to pay for standard instructional salary costs (i.e., faculty and teaching assistant time) except where the student is receiving and paying for individualized instruction/tutoring.
- The revenue generated from course fees must be used to directly support specific course offerings.

SEFS Faculty are asked to determine any specific course-related expenses for their courses. A budget is then developed for each course that will have a course fee. Each line item of the budget is then estimated based on those expected expenses. The total is divided by the estimated enrollment, and the resulting course fee is listed in the relevant UW Time Schedule. Enrollment is estimated by averaging the course enrollment from the previous two years that the course was offered. Some courses are not offered every year but are on an every other year cycle.

Field Courses

Fleet services expenses: including number and type of vehicles, mileage, gasoline, parking, insurance, cleaning, and length of time vehicles will be used. The Fleet Services rate calculator is used to estimate costs. For long field trips, fleet services cleaning fees are built into the course fees to cover this Fleet Services charge.

Drivers for field trips: usually, SEFS faculty are able to recruit field trip drivers from the enrolled students in their courses. Occasionally, when faculty are unable to recruit sufficient drivers from the class, SEFS hires hourly student employees to drive. The Office of Planning and Budgeting has confirmed that this is an expense that can be covered by course fees.

Personal vehicle mileage: occasionally a faculty member will take a personal vehicle on a field trip to haul equipment and students' gear. Their mileage is reimbursed out of course fees.

Food management: faculty decide if students are to buy and bring their own food or if some or all the food will be provided through the course fee. This depends on the nature of the trip (access to services) or the way the trip needs to flow in order to accomplish the work that needs to be done.

Ferry fees: when trips involve crossing the sound or going to Friday Harbor, ferry fees must be paid. We are allowed to take advantage of the (substantial) educational discount.

Access fees: trips to federal or state lands sometimes require an access fee. This fee is incorporated into the course fees for the class.

Camping and/or lodging: Overnight trips often involve camping or staying in a hotel. Group sites are used if possible. Sometimes we have access to Forest Service bunk houses. Field trips

are also sited at the Pack Forest, ONRC, or Friday Harbor facilities where the current rates are paid. At these facilities, food is paid according to each facility's procedures.

Supplies other than food: depending on the field work certain commodities might be needed to facilitate sample gathering or other activities (e.g., we purchase wading boots in various sizes for a hydrology class).

Computers and software: to train students in the use of the most current technologies computers and software for certain courses are purchased each year.

Equipment: forest management and silviculture courses require more equipment than the general-use equipment we have available for check-out. Several courses have a small equipment fee which is pooled to purchase equipment for those courses. This equipment is kept in a separate storage area and is for course use only.

Printing and photocopying: SEFS pays for photocopying tests and incidental copies for courses. When the faculty intends to produce Coursepak-like materials for each student, a course fee is established to pay for these materials. In addition, other courses require students to produce either posters or portfolios. Course fees are established for these items so that students have access to high quality printing, and each student can produce what is required because it has already been paid for through their course fees.

Speaker honoraria and travel expenses: when faculty engage outside speakers for their classes, course fees are established to pay minimal travel expenses and/or an honorarium.

Laboratory Courses

Analyses: SEFS has several laboratory courses that have fees for analyses. Analyses are either done in-house by one of the research scientists in our soils cost-center, or are shipped to an off-campus facility.

Chemicals: BSE laboratory courses require chemicals.

Paper-making supplies: Some BSE courses continue to teach the science of paper-making, and supplies are required for these laboratory courses.

Plant materials and supplies: Many of our courses involve students working with plants that they either propagate, grow, or plant. Supplies include soil, pots, labels, drip irrigation parts, seeds, plants, etc.

This exhaustive list of current course fee line items does not preclude a future line item of a different nature.

REFUNDS

According to University policy, students will receive full credit (including course fees) for any classes that are dropped by the 14th calendar day of the quarter. After the 14th day, departmental policy prevails. In SEFS course fees generally will not be refunded after the 14th day because

purchases for the class will have already been made. If a student requests a refund, special consideration may be given for extenuating circumstances, such as in the case of a hardship withdrawal, but only if the learning experience of the remaining students would not be compromised, and the student has not extensively participated in the field or laboratory work. Some of SEFS field courses are held before the quarter begins so there is a risk that a student could drop a course before the 14th calendar day and receive a full refund of course fees even though the student received full benefit of the activity for which the course fee was established. If a refund is to be processed appropriate SEFS staff will work with Student Fiscal Services to process the refund.