



PA State System of Higher Education Board of Governors

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POLICY 1989-05-A: STUDENT FEES

See Also:

Adopted: October 19, 1989

Amended: July 18, 1996, April 8, 1999, January 20, 2011, January 26, 2017, and July 11, 2024

A. Purpose

To establish a delineation between the purposes of tuition and other fees, provide clarity regarding the purposes of the fees for which students are assessed, and limit the use of various miscellaneous fees for instructional purposes.

B. Definitions

- **Fee**—A fixed charge established by a council of trustees or university president, or Board of Governors, according to authorities under Act 188 of 1982, to recover costs of certain services, materials, or activities provided.
- **Fees for optional, individual services**—Fees for one-time services, such as application, transcripts, or graduation participation; or optional services that a student may choose to receive, such as student parking, placement services, individual music lessons, competency exams, advanced placement exams, licensure exams, certifications, interest on deferred payment, ROTC uniform, equipment rental, international experiences, distance education, off-campus site participation, noncredit education, optional field trips, and similar services.
- **Instructional fees**—Instructional fees may be used to support general instructional operations and academic facilities needs. These fees may be used to cover unusual costs of certain special programs, such as musical instruments, practica, instructional equipment, required course/university tests and examinations, laboratory supplies, course-required field trips, student teaching, clinical experiences, or related activities. General instructional fees are mandatory. Program or course-specific instructional fees are not considered mandatory for the purposes of this policy.
- **Mandatory fees**—Fees charged to all students participating through a particular campus or delivery mode, such as general instructional fees, student activity fees, student union fees, recreation center fees, health center fees, registration fees, and transportation fees.

- **Fines/penalty fees**—To offset costs of special services, such as late fees (late registration, payment, application, library return, etc.), bad check, drop/add, lost key, parking fines, I.D. replacement, room change, breakage, damage, or related expenses.
- **Student activity fees**—Fees established for activities associated with student associations and governments, and to support other extracurricular activities such as lectures, concerts, athletics, student newspaper, forensics, dramatics, and related activities.
- **Tuition**—The basic fee established by the Board of Governors for rendering educational services, as enumerated in Act 188 of 1982. Also, the technology tuition fee, a separate tuition fee established by the Board of Governors, with rate-approving authority delegated to the councils of trustees, for rendering technology resources and services to enhance student learning experiences.

C. Policy

1. As enumerated in Act 188 of 1982, the councils of trustees may establish university fees. The councils of trustees may establish a mandatory instructional fee to support the educational mission of the university. The instructional fee may be assessed based on a per-credit or full-time basis. The maximum amount assessable to a student shall be limited to the per-credit tuition for the number of credits attempted as follows:
 - a. Baccalaureate Degree—10%
 - b. Master's Degree—15%
 - c. Graduate Professional Programs—20%
 - d. Doctoral Degree—20%
2. All other mandatory fees established by the councils of trustees must support auxiliary and/or other activities that are ancillary to the educational mission of the university.
3. Councils of trustees may establish instructional fees that are specific to students enrolled in certain high-cost academic programs or courses.
4. As enumerated in Act 188 of 1982, the presidents may, in cooperation with their respective student association, establish student activity fees.
5. A technology tuition fee will be approved by the councils of trustees for all students; the fee must be structured in a manner that is differentiated by domicile status (in-state/out-of-state). If a university's council of trustees does not act to approve a recommended rate, the technology tuition fee for that university will change at a rate equal to the percentage change in tuition approved by the Board of Governors for that respective year.