



## POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR SPECIAL COURSE FEES

Reference number : VUNI-38  
Published date : 18/08/2022  
Effective date : 18/08/2022  
Applicable Department : All Colleges  
Access level : Internal Use

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### Records of changes

Version	Published Date	Effective Date	Approved by	Description of changes
v1.0	18/08/2022	18/08/2022	Developed by: The Office of Planning and Registrar Reviewed by: Educational Affairs Committee; Finance Department Approved by: President and Provost	New Release

## 1. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to establish specific policies and procedures for Special Course Fees that may be assessed to cover institutional costs that are not covered by the course's regular instructional budget.

## 2. Scope

Special Course Fees are applied as charges in addition to the regular student tuition and fees charged in credit or non-credit-bearing courses. These fees are assessed to all students enrolled in a specific course, or in a particular section of a course. Course fees are not to be collected in any other manner.

## 3. Policy/Procedural Principles

- 3.1. Colleges are responsible to administer the Special Course Fee funds in ways that provide students paying those fees a reasonable opportunity to benefit equitably from the expenditure of the course fee. University may conduct periodic audits to ensure compliance.
- 3.2. The charge cannot exceed the actual cost of providing the product or service available to the student. Or in another way, Colleges may only use Special Course Fee revenue to cover expenses for which they were intended. Difficulty in securing adequate regular budget support shall not be the determining factor in the decision to charge selected students a course fee.
- 3.3. The Special Course Fees must be approved in writing by the Provost if it is a university-required course or College Dean if it is a course relevant / required only to students for the degree program of a College. Also, the Dean of the College should approve for any electives offered by the College.
- 3.4. Information about Special Course Fees of individual courses must be clearly advertised or communicated to students prior to registration for the semester in which the special course fee is assessed.
- 3.5. Colleges/Instructors are not allowed to collect payment in classrooms or directly from students. Students will be made aware of course fees prior to registration through the class schedule. Billing and payment of Special Course Fees are through the standard University practices (on the student billing section on the SIS system).

## 4. Policy/Procedural Statements

- 4.1 Conditions for requiring the special course fees:
  - a) A student exercises an option to participate beyond the minimum requirements of a course and it results in additional costs to the institution, or
  - b) A student consumes the standard resources provided to all students to complete course requirements and requires additional resources to complete the requirements or upgrades the materials used to complete the requirements.
- 4.2 Special course fees **MAY** be charged in the following situations:
  - a) Specialized Materials: specialized materials that become the property of the student at course completion (*Example: In an art class, a course fee may be assessed to pay for*

*the supplies students use to create artworks (if students keep these at the end of the semester).*

- b) Instructional Materials: costs of extensive instructional handout materials that are clearly a replacement for a textbook or substantial reference materials for a course; supplementary textbooks and resource materials not available at VinUniversity Library.
- c) High cost or specialized consumable materials (i.e wine for wine tasting classes, chemicals, electronic kits).
- d) Experiential learning activities (e.g., internships, field trips, service learning): transportation, lodging, food, equipment rental, and facilities costs incurred in the delivery of activity courses as part of credit course instruction that cannot be discretely and separately itemized from the total activity course cost.

*Example: In a history class, a course fee may be assessed to pay for admission to a museum in Hanoi, as well as bus transportation to and from the museum (Note that the fee may also include payment for snacks and meals consumed during the trip if doing so simplifies scheduling and represents cost savings for students).*

- e) Third-party Payments: Specialized services provided by external business entities, purchased by the College, and directly used by students in activities integral to course instruction, such as uniform/coverall laundry service; Assessment activities that directly benefit the student and are performed by third-party vendors; when instruction requires the use of facilities that the University/College does not control.
- f) Pass-through Costs: costs such as student liability insurance.
- g) Other: other special or extraordinary costs of a course, including the costs for distance and/or online delivery; A refundable deposit to ensure the return in a reasonable condition of VinUni equipment and supplies temporarily assigned to a student; Specialized equipment, software, and equipment repair and maintenance.

#### 4.3 Special Course Fees **MAY NOT** be charged in the following situations:

- a) For health and safety equipment required in carrying out course activities.  
*Example: In an engineering class, a course fee may not be assessed to cover the cost of required safety shields, respirators, eye wash equipment, etc. Even though students may retain such safety equipment at semester's end, it is likely to have no useful or resale value past the duration of the course.*
- b) For computer and other laboratory equipment usage, primary software, maintenance, and related supplies, used by all students and remaining with the college at semester's end.

*Example: In an accounting class, a course fee may not be assessed to cover the cost of licensing special software applications that students are required to use. Such licenses are typically assigned to a machine (e.g., a PC or a server) and not a specific user.*

- c) For instructional services rendered by faculty, staff, and teaching assistants.
- d) Books, periodicals, and other subscriptions for University/College libraries or for shared use by the students and faculty.
- e) Faculty travel and lodging.

- f) Costs associated with “password access” to specific course materials.
- g) In general, for activities required in the course of instruction, even if such activities represent special or extraordinary costs.

*Example: In a biology class, a course fee may not be assessed for the purpose of purchasing specimens for dissection.*

#### 4.4 The following are considered to be Personal Expenses for Students and would not involve a Special Course Fee:

- a) Food and incidentals on field trips unless otherwise included in the special course fee assessed.
- b) Transportation to sites related to instruction, clinical assignments, and other practical activities (except the transportation is arranged by the University).
- c) Personal health, safety, and dress requirements related to instruction.
- d) Equipment recommended (i.e., not required) in a credit-bearing course.
- e) Required books, publications, and software, even if retained by the student at the completion of the course (For these items, it is best that students have the freedom to shop competitively in markets that include legally obtained used goods).

#### 4.5 Requesting a Course Fee:

- a) Colleges must complete a Special Course Fee Request Form for any new fee or any change to an existing fee. Fees are requested either as part of the New Course Proposal or of the Course Revision submission. Requests should be submitted at least two months prior to the start of the first effective semester.
- b) All course fees and changes to established course fees must be requested in writing and approved in writing by the Provost or designee(s).
- c) Colleges should be aware that, while the course fee is considered a cost of education, it is not calculated in financial aid awards. Therefore, Colleges should be judicious in deciding which courses truly require a unique fee.

#### 4.6 Deadlines, Billing, Offset and Refund:

- a) Course fees will not be added after registration has begun. Therefore, requests must be made well in advance (at least one month) of registration for the semester in which the fee is to be assessed. This allows sufficient time for review and implementation.
- b) Billing and payment of special course fees must observe standard University practices. The preferred method of course fee collection involves posting charges to student accounts on the SIS system (currently managed by the Office of University Registrar).
- c) Offset: Students may offset the special course fees during the Add/Drop period if they wish to drop the course. The remaining balance will be processed in the next billing cycle. The student must submit the petition or supporting documentation to the Registrar.
- d) Special refund consideration: The College Dean or Designee may make exceptions for refunds by the last day of the Drop period due to students’ medical reasons, or other

extenuating circumstances. After the Withdraw period, there will be no refund or offset.

## **5. Abbreviations and Definitions**

**Special Course Fee:** is an additive fee or charge on top of the standard fee which may be charged to students enrolled in a specific course for materials and/or activities required for that course. It is imposed to offset unfunded costs associated with an individual course offered either on or off campus or using other modalities.

## **6. Roles and Responsibilities**

- 6.1. Faculty/Program Director: complete the request form and directs the request to the appropriate College Dean or Designee or the assigned Committee.
- 6.2 College Dean or Designee: review the request form before submission.
- 6.3 Head of Finance Department: validate the special course fee request before approval.
- 6.4 Provost/College Dean: approve the request.
- 6.5 Head of Planning and Registrar: co-validate and endorse and add to the master course fee approval list, complete the special course fee set-up including the name of the fee charged to the student account on the SIS system, issuance of billing, etc).

## **7. Related Documents and Forms**

[VUNI Special Course Fees Request Form vF.docx](#) *(Please open in Word)*