



MEMORANDUM

TO: University Council

FROM: Michel Beaver, CPA, Associate VP Tax & Revenue Services, Harden Scragg, Staff Attorney and Assistant Policy Counsel

DATE: August 9, 2022

RE: Consent Agenda Item for September 12, 2022 Meeting
Revised Student Fees and Charges Policy

I. Introduction.

This policy describes when student fees and other incidental fees will be charged. This policy is a TBR migration and was previously approved by University Council and the President on April 11, 2022. A revision has been made to Section III. (D).3: Technology Access Fee. This minor change aligns with the ETSU Information Technology Council's guidelines for use of Technology Access Fees. A copy of the policy is attached.

II. Legal Review.

The Office of University Counsel completed its review of the initial policy on 03/28/2022 and completed its review of the revised policy on 08/01/2022, and found no legal issues, conflicts, or inconsistencies with other ETSU policies or procedures

III. Public Comment Period.

The policy was posted from for public comment from 7/25/2022 to 8/08/2022. Six comments were submitted during this period:

1. Comment from David Adkins:

This revision doesn't mention the Student Library Fee. It needs inclusion.

Policy originator's response: The Student Library Fee is part of the General Student Activity Fee. The descriptions of the Program Service Fees have been updated.

2. Comment from Kathleen Eclay:

This comment is less about the fees themselves and more about who is required to pay which fees. I presume that ETSU invites senior citizens (over age 60) and veterans (of any age) to audit classes, tuition free, with the mission of community outreach and encouragement to these groups be intellectually engaged. Though some fees are waived (e.g. student activity fee) with the more recent addition of various other fees that are separate from tuition but still payable to audit a class, auditing classes has become much costlier, and discouraging for many seniors, especially for a science or studio arts class (\$50/credit [hour] adding up to \$200 for a class with lab) and/or if you are auditing an online course (\$130 flat fee). I have been told, but am not certain, that veterans may not have to pay these fees. The wording is vague on the website. I expect that ETSU intends to continue the good will offer of affordable auditing for senior citizens and perhaps the fee payment policy in this regard can be re-evaluated.,

Policy originator's response:

The fees commenter refers to are not eligible for exemption under T.C.A. § 49-7-113, T.C.A. § 49-7-102 and T.C.A. § 49-7-2304. These code sections only waive maintenance fees and do not address additional fees.

3. Comment from D S:

I personally am less worried about the collection of fees than I am about how they are being used. Fees and tuitions continue to rise, while the quality of the facilities deteriorates. Buildings are full of mold and still leaking every time it rains, lack of appropriate accessibility options not only for students but also for teachers, and how about the wasted resources of the numerous university-owned vehicles sitting around campus that have not even been moved in over a year. I realize this is not an actual comment on the policy, but these are things that should be considered when making these policies and wasting money on flashy items to impress the public while upperclassmen deal with improper facilities and equipment.

Policy originator's response: The comment provided by DS was not responsive to the actual policy posted and under consideration. Even so, it would be appropriate to respond by recognizing the work of ETSU Facilities Management and staff in support of facilities and grounds maintenance, planning, construction, renovation, environmental compliance, and campus safety and sustainability. It would also be appropriate to direct the commenter's attention to the multiple campus infrastructure, renovation, maintenance, and beautification projects accomplished and made possible by the fee for the [Facilities Improvement Fund](#).

4. Comment from Sharon McGee:

1--Section III.B.2. --"Undergrad and Graduate Admissions Office" should be changed to "Undergraduate Admissions and Graduate School"

Policy originator's response: Noted and changed.

2--Section III.H.1 Application Fees--the language in this proposed policy conflicts with the approved Graduate Admissions Policy. Please see Section VIII of that [policy](#), which reads:

*ETSU does not waive the application fee except in these circumstances: A. McNair Scholars receive an application fee waiver; B. **A currently enrolled ETSU graduate student seeking admission to an additional graduate degree or certificate program**; and C. On occasion, the Graduate School may provide a limited fee waiver as part of a special promotion at the discretion of the Dean of the Graduate School.*

The bold section indicates contradictory language, but the other waivers of application fees also could conflict with this policy. (All of these waivers, by the way, were discussed with Finance prior to proposal and went out for public comment as part of the policy before approval.)

Furthermore, Undergraduate Admissions often runs free application weeks. Will they no longer be able to do that?

Policy originator's response: The following line has been added to the **Policy in Section III.H.1 Application Fees**:

ETSU does not waive the application fee except in specific circumstances outlined in the Graduate School Admission Policy for Degree-seeking Students or when Undergraduate Admissions promotes a free application week/event.

3--Section III.H.2 Late Registration Fees--The last graduate deadline is August 10. In some cases, students may not receive an offer of admission with time to register by the first day of classes. In these cases, Graduate School has been able to inform Bursar and get the late fee waived. Will that no longer the case? That's fine, and if so, some graduate programs will need to move their application deadline earlier so students avoid a late fee.

Policy originator's response: The policy contains a section on Approval of Exceptions. The President can approve an exception for Graduate School late registration fees. This could possibly be done by memo giving Graduate School the authority to approve removal of the late registration fees in certain circumstances. Undergraduate Admissions could provide a similar memo for similar circumstances.

4--Section III.H.3 Orientation Fee---Currently, only undergraduates pay an orientation fee, not graduate students. Is the intent that Graduate Students also need to be pay an orientation fee? Or should the language be clarified to say students may be charged an orientation fee? or undergraduates are charged an orientation fee?

Policy originator's response: The word "Undergraduate" has been added to this section to be more specific.

5--Throughout the document, I am confused that 10 hours is considered full-time graduate enrollment. We have always considered 9 hours full-time enrollment. It would seem that this policy would change that??

Policy originator's response: The 10 hours referred to in this policy is in reference to when the hourly rate discount for maintenance fees begins. The following was clarified to specify that the definitions used here are for tuition rates. A separate hourly rate for out-of-state, Other US States, Border State & International tuition is set for undergraduate and graduate students. For tuition rates, a full-time student is defined as an undergraduate enrolled in twelve (12) hours or a graduate student enrolled in ten (10) hours.

5. Comment from Mark Edenfield:

ETSU charges a course fee for all courses in addition to the maintenance fee. The course fees are negating the intent of T.C.A. 49-7-113, allowing seniors to audit courses without charge.

These course fees are enumerated in proposed policy: “G. Miscellaneous Course Fees. Assessed for courses with additional requirements outside the normal instructional classroom or to provide additional support services to students (i.e., distance education fees, private instruction music fees, etc.)”

Since all classes have a course fee, it is being assessed irrespective of “additional support services to students”, in essence unbundling the maintenance fee.

Policy should recognize these fees as being exempt per T.C.A 49-7-113.

Policy originator's response: Response: The intent of T.C.A. § 49-7-113 is not to allow seniors to audit courses without *any* charge. The intent of T.C.A. § 49-7-113 is to allow seniors to “audit courses at any state-supported college or university without paying tuition charges, maintenance fees, student activity fees or registration fees; however, this privilege may be limited or denied by the college or university on an individual classroom basis according to space availability.” Course fees to provide additional support services to students are specifically not exempted under the statute.

6. Comment from Shella Bennett:

A potential issue is created when students' permanent addresses are changed as a result of NCOA. Student charges are based on residency coding, which are based on permanent address. Errors on census edit reports are created when permanent addresses change that contradicts the existing residency code.

Policy originator's response: We are aware of this issue and are currently pulling together a committee to address it.

IV. Recommendation.

IN CONSIDERATION of all of the above, the Office of University Counsel, on behalf of the Office of Tax and Revenue Services, recommends **APPROVAL** of the *Revised Student Fees and Charges Policy*.

