



## MARICOPA COMMUNITY COLLEGES SPECIAL COURSE FEE GUIDELINES

The Maricopa Community College District Governing Board expects that students will contribute to the normal basic costs of their education through the payment of tuition and registration fees. With Board approval, Colleges may charge a special course fee to offset unique course costs that exceed the normal basic costs that are covered by tuition. The special course fee provides additional funding for extraordinary materials/services or access to specialized equipment/software necessary to meet the stated course competencies.

Colleges may not charge a special course fee to cover normal basic operating expenses or any of the following costs:

1. Specialized instructional equipment for which there is no written equipment replacement plan and which is available to students who do not pay a course fee
2. Access to general academic support services such as libraries or other general use equipment and facilities that other students use without paying a fee
3. Salaries for administrative staff
4. Academic advising
5. Health and safety equipment in general education instructional spaces required to carry out course activities such as equipment required by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration including safety shields, respirators and eyewash equipment. This restriction does not apply to safety equipment that is highly specialized and unique to an occupation or that requires custom fitting
6. Travel expenses for extended Field Study which are not refundable should the student withdraw from the course prior to the travel occurring
7. Dual enrollment courses for high school students
8. Text books, electronic text books, or other materials and supplies readily available from the bookstore. Exceptions may be made for courses delivered through competitive distance learning agreements where marketing the course fee as part of the overall course delivery costs would simplify the process or increase Maricopa's competitive advantage.

### PROCESS

The Financial Planning and Budget Office shall include in the annual Budget Development Handbook the calendar due dates and prescribed format for submission of any changes to current and/or proposed course fees. All course fee changes (increase, decrease, elimination) require Governing Board approval. Colleges will have an opportunity to update established course fees or new fees on existing courses two times per year. Generally the Governing Board will review most requested course fee changes at the February Board meeting, with final approval in March. If necessary, Colleges may also submit course fee changes for review and approval at the September Board meeting.

Colleges are encouraged to submit requests for establishment of a new fee for a new course within the regular fee update calendar. This will enable the Governing Board to fully evaluate the combined impact of student tuition and fees.

## **JUSTIFICATION**

It is anticipated that most courses will not require an additional fee; therefore, Colleges must justify all requests to establish or increase a course fee. If the extraordinary costs of a course are reduced or eliminated, then the course fee must be adjusted accordingly at the next regular submission cycle. In addition, Colleges must notify the Governing Board of any substantial change in the special course materials, services, equipment, etc. that would materially alter the justification for the fee as previously approved. Colleges may request a course fee to address the following two types of resource needs: extraordinary instructional materials/services and specialized equipment/software replacement.

### **Extraordinary Instructional Materials/Services**

Extraordinary instructional materials/services include supplies and activities that are unique to a course and necessary to achieve the stated course competencies. All students who pay a fee should have a reasonable opportunity to benefit. Examples of specialized materials/services are as follows:

- Materials/supplies consumed or retained by the student when the course ends including specialized or custom fitted safety equipment
- Transportation or admission costs related to field trips that are a required part of the curriculum
- Participation in or access to specialized course-specific instruction including small class sizes or stipends for mentor teachers as mandated by an oversight accrediting body such as nursing, dental hygiene or other such regulated professions or required by a certifying state agency such as the Arizona Department of Education
- Access to or rental of specialized equipment, software, media or facilities
- Maintenance and repair of specialized equipment, software, media or facilities
- Access to highly specialized instructional support services and tutoring provided in addition to the instructor of record
- A “pass-through” fee for course related materials

### **Specialized Equipment/Software Replacement**

Specialized equipment/software replacement refers to support for planned replacement of dedicated instructional equipment/software that reaches the end of its useful life. The equipment must be dedicated for use by students in courses that pay the special fee. Examples of specialized equipment/software replacement include the following:

- Video camera and editing equipment
- Computerized medical equipment
- Specialized safety equipment unique to an occupational course
- Dedicated Computer Lab Site licenses for specialized software
- Furnishings required to ensure appropriate operation of special equipment

Course fee revenues for specialized equipment/software replacement must be deposited into the specific course fee charge center and expensed for capital purposes. Any year end balances may be carried over in accordance with a written replacement plan.

## **ADMINISTRATION**

Special Course fees will be monitored following two acceptable methods: 1) detailed cost information for all components of the special course fee, or 2) a written equipment/software replacement plan. The administration of these methods will be as follows:

### **Detailed cost information**

Detailed cost information shall be used for all components of each special course fee for extraordinary instructional materials/services. The detailed cost information will be prepared and maintained by college staff. This information will be reviewed periodically at the discretion of the District's internal audit department.

### **Written equipment/software replacement**

Colleges must have a written replacement plan that specifies the equipment/software, replacement cost, useful life, the projected number of student users, and a replacement schedule. Colleges must establish charge centers for the specialized equipment/software purchase or replacement component of course fees. Departments that share specialized resources may establish a joint charge center and prepare a single course fee plan. This written replacement plan will be reviewed periodically for reasonableness and compliance at the discretion of the District's internal audit department.