

Frequently Asked Questions Concerning Compulsory Fees Charged for University Operated Services

March 11, 2014

At this meeting, the administration will present the proposed operating plans and fees associated with a number of University operated student services for the upcoming fiscal year. The following frequently asked questions and answers are presented for the information of members.

What policies govern fees charged for University operated student services?

Three U of T policies govern these fees: the *Policy on Ancillary Fees*; the *Policy for Compulsory Non-Academic Incidental Fees*; and the *Memorandum of Agreement between The University of Toronto, The Students' Administrative Council, The Graduate Students' Union and The Association of Part-time Undergraduate Students for a Long-Term Protocol on the Increase or Introduction of Compulsory Non-tuition Related Fees*.¹ The *Memorandum* is commonly referred to as the *Protocol on Non-Tuition Fees* or simply the *Protocol*. The *Protocol* is considered to be both an agreement between the University and the student organizations as required by Ministry of Training, Colleges & Universities guidelines, and a policy of the University approved by the Governing Council. The policies are available on the Governing Council web site and are described on the page attached to this document.

What is the Protocol?

The *Protocol* is the *Memorandum of Agreement between The University of Toronto, The Students' Administrative Council, The Graduate Students' Union and The Association of Part-time Undergraduate Students for a Long-Term Protocol on the Increase or Introduction of Compulsory Non-tuition Related Fees*. The *Protocol* describes the procedures and limitations associated with the establishment of and increases to compulsory non-academic incidental fees charged for University operated student services. Such a protocol is required pursuant to a guideline of the Ministry of Training, Colleges & Universities.

What is UTI?

UTI is the University of Toronto Index. Generally speaking, UTI is an indexation of a service's fee which takes into account changes in salary and benefit costs, revenue from other sources, occupancy costs, and changes in enrolment. It is calculated separately for each fee. The result

¹ At the time the *Protocol* was approved, the Students' Administrative Council (SAC; now operating as the University of Toronto Students' Union, UTSU) was the Governing Council recognized 'representative student committee' for all full-time undergraduates at the University and signed the *Protocol* on their behalf. When the Scarborough Campus Students' Union (SCSU) became a 'representative student committee' in 2004, Governing Council approval was granted on the condition that SAC continue to be the signatory for the *Protocol* on behalf of full-time undergraduate UTSC students.

of the calculation is an indexed fee. For comparison purposes, it is sometimes described as a percentage increase from the previous year. Appendix C of the *Protocol* describes the method for calculating UTI. Appendix E illustrates examples of the calculations.

What is CPI?

CPI is the inflation factor equal to the Consumer Price Index as described in the University of Toronto's *Long-range Budget Projection Assumptions and Strategies* (or its equivalent).

What are COSS, QSS and CSS?

COSS is the Council on Student Services, QSS is the UTM Quality Services to Students group, and CSS is the UTSC Council on Student Services. Collectively, these are referred to as the "Protocol Bodies." Pursuant to the *Protocol*, the main duty of the Protocol Bodies is to provide advice to the Governing Council in respect of the services' operating plans, budgets and changes in fees governed by the *Protocol*. Pursuant to the *University of Toronto Act, 1971*, the Governing Council has delegated authority to approve compulsory non-academic incidental fees to the University Affairs Board and to the UTM and UTSC Campus Councils (both of which receive recommendations from the respective Campus Affairs Committees). The decisions of COSS, QSS and CSS (i.e., approval or failure to approve) related to operating plans and fees of student services are conveyed to the appropriate bodies of the Governing Council when the services' plans are under consideration.

Are there limitations with respect to increases to fees charged for University operated services?

Prior to the approval by the appropriate bodies of the Governing Council, permanent increases to fees which are larger than the lesser of CPI or UTI require the approval of either: (a) approval of the relevant Protocol Body including a majority of the student members present at the meeting at which the fee proposal is considered;² or (b) the majority of the relevant students voting in a referendum.

² Some refer to this as a "double majority" (i.e., among those present and voting at a duly constituted meeting of the Protocol Body, approval of the majority of the voting members, and approval of the majority of the student voting members.).

If COSS, QSS, or CSS decline to recommend approval of operating plans and fees, what options are available to the administration?

If the relevant Protocol Body does not approve a proposed fee increase, the administration is entitled to seek approval by the Governing Council of:

- (a) a permanent fee increase of the lesser of CPI or UTI;
and
- (b) a temporary (three year) increase of the greater of CPI or UTI.

What rules govern referenda concerning increases to student services fees?

Appendix D of the *Protocol* describes the procedures for referenda for increases in compulsory non-academic incidental fees covered by the *Protocol*. It provides that referenda must be conducted by mailing ballots (i.e., via Canada Post) to applicable students. The *Protocol* does not permit referenda to be conducted electronically via the Internet.

Are student societies required to comply with the *Protocol* in respect of their own fees?

No. However, student societies are required to meet the requirements articulated in the *Policy for Compulsory Non-Academic Incidental Fees*.

Why is there more than one fee?

Some fees for some specific services have existed for many years, in some cases decades. “Student Services” fees were introduced in 1993. The Student Services fees on each campus fund a range of programs and units. The *Protocol* specifically identifies a number of fees as following under its provisions, including the respective Student Services, Health Services, and Athletics and Recreation fees for each campus.³ The Hart House fee is also explicitly identified. In practice, the University treats all fees described by Category 1 of the *Policy on Ancillary Fees* as subject to the terms of the *Protocol*. With respect to the operations funded by each fee, the *Protocol* allows for the reallocation of resources in response to changing service demands. However, the reallocation may not, without appropriate approval, result in the creation of a new service or the discontinuation of an existing service.

Why aren’t the fees indexed automatically?

The *Protocol* does not provide this as an option.

³ In 2002, the University Affairs Board approved the separation of the St. George Campus Student Services fee into two fees, the Student Affairs fee and the Student Services fee (both of which funded a range of programs and services). In 2008, the University Affairs Board approved a proposal to combine the St. George Campus Student Services, Health Services, and Student Affairs fees into a single fee named the Student Life Programs and Services fee.

What's the difference between compulsory non-academic incidental fees and other ancillary fees?

“Compulsory non-academic incidental fees” include those charged for student services provided by the University, student societies, and special projects. Fees charged for University operated services fall under Category 1 of the *Policy on Ancillary Fees*, are subject to the provisions of the *Policy for Compulsory Non-Academic Incidental Fees*, and fall under the jurisdiction of the *Protocol*. Other ancillary fees are charged for a variety of items and services (e.g., library fines, and cost recovery fees for equipment that becomes the property of a student). The UTM and UTSC Campus Affairs Committees and Campus Councils, and the University Affairs Board, are responsible for matters concerning compulsory non-academic incidental fees. The Business Board is responsible for matters related to other ancillary fees.

Are incidental fee increases automatically covered by OSAP and UTAPS?

Both OSAP and UTAPS consider compulsory non-academic incidental fees to be part of the amount included in the assessment.

Are incidental fees for student services refundable?

No. The University charges the applicable compulsory non-academic incidental fees to all students, with very few exceptions. There are, however, some portions of student society fees for which students may receive a refund upon request directly from the student society.⁴

How do students become aware of the services and organizations to which they pay fees?

The individual fees charged are listed in the student account information available through the web service of ROSI. Students become aware of the services and organizations through a variety of means including University print publications, the University's websites, student society handbooks, and various orientation programs including those offered by the various services.

Who can I contact in the administration for more information about compulsory non-academic incidental fees and the University's practices concerning these matters?

The Office of the Vice-Provost, Students and First-Entry Divisions can answer questions concerning these matters.

⁴ Some conditions may apply.

Brief Summary of Relevant Policies and Regulations Which Govern Compulsory Non-Academic Incidental Fees at the University of Toronto

There are three University of Toronto policies which govern compulsory non-academic incidental fees and charges of these fees to students:

Policy on Ancillary Fees: The *Policy* describes categories of permitted ancillary fees including fees for services provided by the University (Category 1), fees for student organizations (Category 2), fees for special projects, including capital projects funded by a student levy through a student society (Category 3), cost recovery fees (e.g., equipment), user fees and fines (e.g., library fines), and system wide fees (e.g., University Health Insurance Plan).

Policy for Compulsory Non-Academic Incidental Fees: The *Policy* provides the requirements and conditions associated with compulsory charges of fees described under Categories 1, 2 and 3 outlined in the *Policy on Ancillary Fees* (i.e., student services fees, student society fees, and special projects fees). The manner in which these fees are charged is also described. Specific requirements applicable to student societies are included in the *Policy*.

Memorandum of Agreement between The University of Toronto, The Students' Administrative Council, The Graduate Students' Union and The Association of Part-time Undergraduate Students for a Long-Term Protocol on the Increase or Introduction of Compulsory Non-tuition Related Fees: The "*Protocol on Non-Tuition Fees*" or simply the *Protocol* describes the procedures and limitations associated with the establishment of and increases to compulsory non-academic incidental fees charged for University operated student services (i.e., Category 1 of the *Policy on Ancillary Fees*). The terms of reference and rules of procedure for the Council on Student Services (COSS) is also provided. COSS has an advisory role to the University Affairs Board on the approval of St. George Campus and University-wide student services fees. Pursuant to the *Protocol*, the former faculty councils of UTM and UTSC established the UTM Quality Service to Students Committee (QSS) and the UTSC Council on Student Services (CSS) respectively. QSS and CSS provide advice to the UTM and UTSC Campus Affairs Committees and Campus Councils in relation to the consideration of student services fees charged only to students on those campuses.⁵

There is one key government guideline on issues related to compulsory ancillary fees:

Section 5.2 of the *Ontario Operating Funds Distribution Manual* (Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities) outlines conditions on charging non-tuition-related compulsory ancillary fees. In particular, the Ministry's guidelines require universities to establish protocols with student governments (defined as the minimum number of student

⁵Innis College has established a Student Services Committee, which provides advice to the Innis College Council, and in turn, to the University Affairs Board.

organizations which have elected leadership and which when viewed in combination, represent all students charged compulsory fees) which set out the “means by which students will be involved in decisions to increase existing compulsory non-tuition-related ancillary fees or introduce new ones.” The University’s *Protocol* described above is mandated by this Ministry guideline. The guidelines became effective for the 1994-95 year and have not been reviewed or revised since.