



**FOR INFORMATION**

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**TO:** Business Board

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**PRESENTER:** Professor Scott Mabury, Vice-President, Operations & Real Estate  
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**DATE:** March 5, 2025 for March 12, 2025

**AGENDA ITEM:** 5 (b)

**ITEM IDENTIFICATION:**

Category 5, Cost Recovery Ancillary Fees, 2025-26; and Category 6, Administrative User Fees and Fines, 2025-26

**JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:**

Pursuant to Section 5.11 (b) the Business Board has responsibility for academic ancillary fees.

The University's *Policy on Ancillary Fees* makes provision for a Category 5: University Schedule of Cost Recovery Fees and a Category 6: University Schedule of User Fees and Fines.

Under the Policy, fees shown on the schedules may be adjusted annually by administrative authority of the Vice President, Operations & Real Estate Partnerships, provided that the adjustments relate to changes in the cost of the materials or services provided. These changes are to be reported annually to the Business Board for information. The introduction or removal of a Schedule 6 User Fee or Fine is submitted to the Business Board for review and approval.

**GOVERNANCE PATH:**

**1. Business Board [For information] (March 12, 2025)**

**PREVIOUS ACTION TAKEN:**

The 2024-25 fees were considered by the Business Board at its March 13, 2024 meeting.

## HIGHLIGHTS:

Ancillary fees are charged to pay for services, materials, and activities that are not supported by operating grants, capital grants, or tuition fees. The University of Toronto introduced a Policy on Ancillary Fees in 1995 (the *Policy*), which translates the Ancillary Fee Guidelines provided by the Ministry of Colleges, and Universities (MCU) into the University of Toronto context.

There are several factors putting upward pressure on ancillary fees for 2025-26:

- Historically, some departments have partially subsidized some cost-recovery services. But, given the reduced flexibility in their budgets from constrained revenues and pressures on expenses, they have moved to reduce or phase out these subsidies, consistent with the Ministry's cost-recovery fee setting principle. In cases where the subsidy was substantial, some departments have elected to phase in the increase in fees over several years to reduce the impact on students.
- Fees for field trips and study abroad offerings have been impacted by higher supplier costs for transportation and accommodations. An increase in scheduled activities (e.g., lectures, events, tours etc.) across lower levels of estimated enrolment have also required fee increases for some programs.
- Increased vendor costs for supplies and equipment.
- Divisions are encouraged to consider a best practice approach of applying smaller, annual inflation-related increases to ancillary fees versus much larger periodic step-function increases. This reduces the impact on students from large increases and helps keep fees in-line with annual cost inflation.

In total, there are 984 fees in Category 5 and 306 fees in Category 6. Of these, 18% (238) will remain unchanged or will be reduced in 2025-26, 121 fees are new, and 807 fees will see an inflationary increase of 5% or less. There are 124 fees that will increase by more than 5%, primarily due to the factors described above. There are 43 fees that are being removed from the schedules at the requests of the applicable divisions.

Category 5 Cost Recovery Fees and Category 6 Administrative User Fees and Fines have been reviewed in the context of Ministry of Colleges and Universities existing Guidelines and the University's *Policy on Ancillary Fees*. The fees are deemed to be in compliance.

The complete schedules of Category 5 and 6 fees are included in Appendices B and C of the attached report.

## **Report on Implementation of the MCU Directive on the Costs of Educational Materials for 2024-25**

On August 16, 2024, the Ministry of Colleges and Universities (MCU) issued a new *Directive on the Costs of Educational Material* under the *Ministry of Training, Colleges*

*and Universities Act*<sup>1</sup>. Under the Directive, Ontario universities and colleges are required to ensure that students are informed of the costs of textbooks and other learning materials that are mandatory and optional for courses. This new requirement is effective for the Winter 2025 session and institutions are required to report to their relevant governance body annually on implementation of the Directive.

The University of Toronto fully supports the spirit of this Directive to provide information on the anticipated cost of educational materials to students to better inform them as they make course selections. Information on textbooks for many courses is available in advance of each session through the University's Bookstore, however, this does not necessarily cover all courses – in particular, those that do not require the purchase of materials. So, the University has created a new resource that is available to students through Quercus, our Learning Management System (LMS).

The University reached out to all instructors of Winter 2025 courses via Quercus. Instructors were sent a link to an MS Form that collected data on the cost of mandatory and optional learning materials that were not already accounted for in ancillary fees. They were also asked to indicate if a used version of the learning material was acceptable.

### *Instructor Responses*

We received responses for 1,790 courses, which represents 29% of all Winter 2025 courses (both undergraduate and graduate). Significantly, 67.4% of courses reported that there were no costs for mandatory learning materials and 85.1% of courses reported that there were no costs for optional learning materials. This is due, in large part, to instructors leveraging the University's Syllabus Service provided by the University of Toronto Libraries and choosing open access learning materials for courses.

### *Strategies to Increase Reporting*

While this was a reasonable start given the short lead times and implementation part way through the academic year, we are pursuing several strategies to increase reporting of this information:

- Ask academic divisions to share a message with their instructors prior to the next cycle underscoring the importance of completing the form when it is shared.
- Aim to share the form with instructors earlier and to send additional reminder messages to instructors.
- Adjust the form to simplify completion, allowing for a checkbox if there are no costs associated with mandatory and optional learning materials

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ontario.ca/page/ministers-revised-directive-costs-educational-materials-publicly-assisted-colleges-and-universities>

### *Communications to Students*

All students must login to Quercus to access course content, submit assessments, and interact with their instructors. The costs of educational materials have been made available to students via a permanent link on the main menu of Quercus. The link takes students to a searchable table powered by Tableau that lists the course code and the cost of all mandatory and optional learning materials for the courses listed. Additionally, a notification message was displayed on the main page of Quercus for all students to draw their attention to this new resource.

This list will become more comprehensive and useful over time as course information is added each session. Students will be able to view materials for previous offerings of courses to give them a sense of the anticipated costs for courses they are interested in. This will be particularly useful to students as course registration often happens before instructors have finalized plans for the upcoming session.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

Cost Recovery Ancillary Fees and Administrative User Fees and Fines are set at a level to cover the cost of the services provided.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

For information.

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### **DOCUMENTATION PROVIDED:**

- *Schedule of Ancillary Fees (Categories 5 and 6) 2025-26*