

UW POLICY DIRECTORY

Rescinded 03-03-2026

APS 33.3 - Fee Increases Subject to Initiative 601 Limitations

(Approved by the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs by authority of Executive Order No. 4)

1. Overview

Initiative 601 (I-601) was passed by the voters of Washington in 1993 and states, "No fee may increase in any fiscal year by a percentage in excess of the fiscal growth factor for that fiscal year without prior legislative approval." According to the initiative, "fiscal growth factor" means the average of the sum of inflation and population change for each of the prior three fiscal years. The fiscal growth factor is calculated by the state Office of Financial Management.

The State Attorney General's Office has attempted to interpret the initiative. One such interpretation involves the term "fee." The Attorney General's question-and-answer memorandum states "the term includes charges mandated for a governmental service or privilege, but would not include charges in commercial transactions where the state participates as a party to a contract, or as a seller in the marketplace." Such an opinion requires further interpretation by the University to identify specific types of fees as either covered by or exempt from I-601.

2. Fees Subject to I-601 Limitations

The following fees are considered governmental and subject to I-601 limitation:

A. Mandatory Regular Instruction Fees

Mandatory fees related to the regular state-funded instructional program or other degree-granting education programs are subject to I-601, including:

- Application fees to the above programs.
- Registration fees to the above programs (except change of registration and late registration fees, which are considered fines).
- Transcript fees.
- Special course fees to cover the cost of individual instruction in the above programs (e.g., Applied Music).
- Special course fees to cover the cost of required field trips in the above programs.
- Summer Quarter tuition fees.
- English As a Second Language academic program fees.
- Fees charged to students participating in state-funded credit classes on a space-available basis.
- Fees set by a consortium of Washington public institutions which involve access to or placement in the above programs (e.g., Math Placement Test).
- Fees charged to UW students participating in foreign or domestic exchange programs.

- Mandatory program fees in self-sustaining degree-granting programs (e.g., Executive MBA and LLM in Tax Law).

B. Transition School Fees

Transition school fees, where the University is acting in place of a middle or high school in providing public instruction, are subject to I-601 limitations.

3. Fees Not Subject to I-601 Limitations

Fees established or modified by the Washington Legislature after the 1993 Legislative Session for which the institution sets the amount are not subject to I-601 if the enabling legislature does not specifically make them subject to the initiative (e.g., the services and activities fee and the student technology fee).

The following fees or types of fees are considered proprietary and not subject to the I-601 limitation:

- Fees for admission to athletic and artistic performances and museums.
- Parking fees.
- Dormitory and other housing fees, unless residence is mandatory.
- Charges for food in dormitories, cafeterias, vending machines, and coffee shops.
- Non-mandatory course fees related to regular state-funded academic programs or other degree credit and degree-granting education programs to cover the cost of optional field trips or extraordinary supplies which the student could elect to provide themselves.
- Fees for conferences held at the University.
- Non-degree credit continuing education program fees, including the English As a Second Language intensive program.
- Degree-credit continuing education program fees that are not part of a specific degree program, but rather can be applied to any applicable degree.
- Foreign study program fees intended to cover the cost of lodging, meals, transportation, and miscellaneous expenses in the foreign location.
- Fees for use of the Intramural Activities (IMA) facilities.
- Sports skills classes offered by the IMA.
- Fees for use of the Golf Driving Range and the Waterfront Activities Center.
- Hospital and clinic patient care fees and sales of prescription drugs and other patient supplies.
- Fees for use of the University name or logo.
- Fees for use of University buildings, equipment, or grounds.
- Periodical subscription charges and book/pamphlet and audio/video tape sales.
- Fees set by a non-University organization but collected by the University (i.e., doctoral dissertation publication fees for microfilming and binding are mandatory, but the fees are set by the cost of a contracted service).
- Fees set by a consortium of institutions which include institutions outside Washington State.
- Fees set in part by a non-University organization and in part by the University (i.e., Miller's Analogy Test Psychological Corporation charges \$27 per test, and the University charges an additional \$18 to cover the cost of administering the test; this particular test is not mandatory for University students but is used by other schools for admission to Graduate School).

4. Non-Fee Transactions Not Subject to I-601 Limitations

The following types of transactions are not considered fees, and rate increases are not subject to the I-601 limitations:

- Fines and replacement charges for lost or broken materials.
- Change of registration, late registration, and late payment charges are considered fines because they are penalties for not doing something within prescribed time frames.
- Charges to other University units by the Student Accounts Office to recover the cost of collecting fees where the amount comes out of the fee rather than in addition to it.
- Recharges from one University budget to another; these are a means of transferring the cost of a product or service to the appropriate University budget, and they do not reflect charges to the public.

5. New Fees

New fees for new services may be established at any appropriate level subject to approval as provided in [Executive Order No. 44](#). The amount of the fee is not limited by I-601 in the first year but may be thereafter.

6. Fee Approval

Increases in fees subject to the limitations of I-601 as indicated above require the approval of the Vice Provost for Planning and Budgeting prior to implementation. Fees requiring approval by the Provost, President, or Board of Regents (see [Executive Order No. 44](#)) must be approved by the Vice Provost for Planning and Budgeting prior to being forwarded for final approval. Consultation with the Assistant Attorney General is encouraged when considering fee increases, because this area of the law is evolving.

December 1999.

[Edit](#)