



THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT DALLAS  
OFFICE OF THE PROVOST

Date: October 2, 2023  
To: Faculty  
From: Inga H. Musselman, Provost  
Xc: Deans  
Department/Program Heads  
Subject: Course Fees

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Inga Musselman".

Recently, there have been questions about course fees and, in particular, those pertaining to the Top Hat courseware platform. Faculty can deploy Top Hat in a course but cannot compel students to use it if it requires payment that has not been approved. It must be optional.

Importantly, there is a hard cap on course fees through the 2024-2025 academic year. Per the most recent General Appropriations Act, the University cannot require students to pay for anything in course participation that has not previously been approved for the course. The University can recommend such items only if they are truly voluntary or optional. This pertains to classroom tools including, but not limited to, Top Hat, course packs, computer simulations, virtual labs, and physical lab kits.

Please direct any questions to your Department Head or Dean.

**Background:**

The General Appropriations has a rider that states:

*As a result of actions taken by the Texas Legislature to address affordability in higher education, all resident undergraduate academic costs, including tuition, mandatory academic fees, all academic-related general fees, and college course fees, have been frozen for the 2023-24 and 2024-25 academic years.*

The UT System stipulates that any amount of money required for course participation must be disclosed in the course catalog, per Texas Education Code 54.0051, which reads in part:

*Each institution of higher education shall include in the institution's online course catalog, for each course listed in the catalog, a description, and the amount of any special course fee, including an online access fee or lab fee, to be charged specifically for the course.*

The fee also must be approved by the governing board, per TEC 54.504:

*The governing board of an institution of higher education may fix the rate of incidental fees to be paid to an institution under its governance by students and prospective students and may make rules for the collection of the fees and for the distribution of the funds, such funds to be accounted for as other designated funds.*