

SPECIAL INSTITUTIONAL FEE FACT SHEET

What is the Special Institutional Fee?

In 2009, the University System Board of Regents was challenged to oversee and implement more than \$1.4 billion in state funding reductions. The reduction resulted in the loss of faculty and staff positions, cessation of some course offerings, an increase in class sizes, and deferral of much-needed building and infrastructure maintenance, as well as other efforts critical to the academic and student life missions of its member institutions. To address the pressures on the teaching mission and to ensure high-quality course offerings to meet graduation requirements, the University System of Georgia (USG) Board of Regents instituted a Special Institutional Fee to preserve the core instructional, research, and outreach missions of the USG institutions. The fee was initially established as a temporary measure in 2009 and is evaluated annually by the USG. There are no current plans to raise or lower the fee at UGA.

Every USG institution charges the Special Institutional Fee. However, the amount of the fee varies depending on the institution's classification (research, comprehensive, state university, or state college). This classification recognizes the inherent differences in student programs and offerings of the different classifications.

What is the Authorized Use of the Special Institutional Fee?

The Special Institutional Fee is used to support programs, activities and operations that are appropriate to be funded by any educational and general fund source. Unlike other mandatory fees that support specific programs or activities, the Special Institutional Fee supports a broad array of educational and general functions that are essential to the student learning experience. These uses include faculty salaries and associated fringe benefits, graduate student teaching assistantships, classroom maintenance and enhancements, and other operational support for the university's core mission of academics: teaching, research, and public service.

The Special Institutional Fee represents approximately 4% of the University's general fund operating budget [comprised of state appropriations, tuition, fees and Indirect Cost Recovery (IDC)] in support of UGA's core academic activities. At approximately \$39 million in annual revenue, the Special Institutional Fee is a critical component of the University's budget. This annual revenue has become even more important as the University's FY 2021 budget included a 10% reduction in state appropriations that removed \$42 million of state funds from the University's base operating budget. For additional information on the University's annual budget and the board resolution, please see:

http://busfin.uga.edu/budget/budget_reporting/

and

https://www.usg.edu/fiscal_affairs/assets/fiscal_affairs/documents/Board_Approved_Resolution_Special_Institutional_Fee.pdf

At the University of Georgia, we have dedicated funds to maintain excellence of our instructional standards and to enhance the academic experience of our students. Funds generated by the fee, in combination with funds provided through tuition and state appropriations, allow the University to:

- Reduce class sizes, increase sections in high-demand courses and student experience – 105 new faculty members hired since 2016 and over 300 sections added with 20 or fewer students
- Enhance academic advising – nearly 60 new academic advisors added since 2015 and opening of the Exploratory Center
- Focus on experiential learning opportunities for our students
- Enhance classroom and teaching lab funding in support of active learning

- Maintain our libraries and associated staffing in student support facilities such as the Miller and Science Learning Centers
- Provide a faculty-mentored research program through the Center for Undergraduate Research Opportunities (CURO)
- Help to support staff who are dedicated to improving students' lives through the many programs offered by the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs
- Offer a competitive fellows program, assistantships for graduate students, and continue to offer tuition waivers for graduate teaching/research assistants – since academic year 2013-14, the fiscal year doctoral and master's base assistantship rates have both increased, with the doctoral rate increasing by nearly 23%, from \$46,062 to \$56,613.
- Provide a 50% subsidy to Graduate Student Health Insurance premiums for graduate students who are eligible and enrolled in the USG plan.
- Support for Academic Coaching services, Georgia Commitment Scholars, and the ALL Georgia program

At UGA, we are proud that the Special Institutional Fee—combined with critical funding received from the State and the tuition assessed to our students—allows UGA to invest in student-centered programs. Here are a few examples of the specific programs referenced above:

- First Year Odyssey, an opportunity to engage, experience and explore academic life:
<https://fyo.uga.edu/about.html#>
- Graduate School Doctoral and Masters Fellows Awards
<https://grad.uga.edu/index.php/current-students/financial-information/graduate-school-based-financial-assistance/funding-from-graduate-school/>
- Voluntary Tuition Incentive Program
<https://grad.uga.edu/index.php/faculty-and-staff/assistantship-funding-programs/research-tuition-incentive-assistantships-rias/>
- Investing in Smaller Class Sizes, improving student success with even more personalized attention:
http://www.uga.edu/about_uga/profile/uga-investing-44-million-reduce-class-size/
- Enhancing Academic Advising, through opening the Exploratory Center:
http://president.uga.edu/statements_remarks/detail/messages/enhancing-academic-advising/
- Experiential Learning, helping students to learn about solving real world challenges with hands-on experiences:
<https://ovpi.uga.edu/initiatives/experiential-learning>
- Double Dawgs, a program designed to help students graduate with both a bachelor and master's degree in five years:
<https://ovpi.uga.edu/initiatives/the-uga-advantage-double-dawgs-program>