Budget Model for Sustainable Funding: Authoring of New Online Courses and Major Revisions to Existing Online Courses

Faculty of Education
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Budget Model.
This budget model is linked with the Faculty of Education Guidelines and Workflow for Major Revisions to Online Courses document.

The budget model lays out how the costs of the production of new online courses and major revisions to existing online courses will be calculated and recovered.

The intention of the model is to make transparent and sustainable the funding of new online course development and major revisions to existing online courses.

The production and effective maintenance of online courses/programs is very expensive and challenging for post-secondary institutions to recover from tuition alone. Wherever possible, Departments/Schools/Programs should consider applying for funding to produce online courses and programs within the scope of all available Calls for Proposals (e.g., Online Learning Advancement Fund)

Ongoing, routine and minor revisions to online courses will be carried out both by faculty as part of their regular course preparation and by ETS staff at no cost as ETS costs are supported by the PDCE infrastructure overhead.

Kinds of Online Course Labour.
A new online course is a course that has not been offered online previously. It may be one that is newly approved by the UBC Senate, or one that is already in the academic calendar and has been offered previously face to face.

Major Revisions to an existing online course are those requested and approved by a Unit Head following an external review and learning design review by ETS.

There are two major cost categories for a new online course or major revisions to an existing online course: 1) the Faculty subject matter expert course author or major revisions author cost and 2) the Educational Technology Support (ETS) expert project management, content management, graphic design, lecture capture, video production and learning design cost.

PDCE, ETS and Online Courses.
All online courses, whether stand-alone or part of a cohort, are supported by the PDCE infrastructure, which includes the Educational Technology Services infrastructure.
Online courses and programs (e.g., cohorts) are subject to the same fiscal requirement of the faculty as a whole, which is the requirement of operating without a deficit. They must break even at the end of the day.

**Revenues, Overhead and Costs for Online Courses.** All online courses, once they are being offered, are linked directly to a 25% PDCE Overhead. This Overhead is provisioned either from course tuition or cohort tuition. Once a course is running and generating a significant amount to the Overhead fund, ETS costs will be paid for within the scope of the 25% overhead.

New online courses are authored by a subject matter expert faculty member with expert project management, content management, graphic design, lecture capture, video production and learning design support provided by ETS. New online courses by definition have no history of generating tuition and therefore are not linked with any 25% overhead funds. Therefore, the faculty author costs and ETS costs have to be taken into account as part of the burden of production.

The cost for ETS services includes everything other than the cost of the subject matter expert faculty member who authors the content, including project management, content management, graphic design, lecture capture, video production and learning design within the LMS.

**New Online courses (both stand-alone and part of a cohort or program)**

The Faculty New Online Course Author cost is covered by the home Department/Unit as either: (i) a faculty member’s workload (no cost), (ii) a course buy-out ($7,500 to pay for coverage of 3 credits of teaching ), or (iii) work additional to load ($5,500).

ETS costs for the provision of expert project management, content management, graphic design, lecture capture, video production and learning design support required to produce a new online course (equivalent to 3 credits) is $10,0001.

These costs will be paid out of the Department RACR.* They will not be added into a Cohort budget since typically, this cost would render any given offering of a cohort unsustainable due to the small profit margins.

*Of note, each Department or Unit may develop 1 new course a year with no ETS costs ($10,000) charged to the Department / Unit. The Faculty Course Author costs ($0 or $ 7500 or $5500) for this course will still be covered by the Department/Unit.

**Major Revisions to Online courses (both stand-alone and part of a cohort or program)**

1 Production of extensive new media for an online course, including video, may increase this cost.
The Faculty Major Revision Course Author cost is covered by the home Department/Unit as either: (i) a faculty member’s workload (no cost), (ii) a course buy-out ($7,500 to pay for coverage of 3 credits of teaching), or (iii) work additional to load ($5,500).

ETS costs for the provision of expert project management, content management, graphic design, lecture capture, video production and learning design support Major Revisions to an existing online course is $0 and paid for out of the 25% Overhead that the course has already been generating over multiple offerings.