

Special Institutional Fee Frequently Asked Questions

- **What is the Special Institutional Fee (SIF)?**

The SIF is a mandatory fee paid by all students to support the academic and other functions of Georgia Tech. Per the Board of Regents' (BOR) Business Procedures Manual, [Section 24.3.1](#):

This is a general purpose fee charged system-wide by the Board of Regents at all "teaching" institutions. This fee was established in 2009 (BOR Minutes, June 2009) to ensure continued academic excellence during times of reductions in State funding.

The BOR is the governing body of the University System of Georgia.

- **What is the revenue from the fee used for?**

The fee revenue helps pay for all functions that support students, including instruction, facilities operations and maintenance, student services, and administration. Tuition and fees alike provide funds for classroom and lab instruction, as well as academic support services that exist outside the classroom. Per instructions by the BOR, the fee revenue is not earmarked and is credited to Georgia Tech's general fund. It pays for the same functions as tuition and state funding. Per the Board of Regents' Business Procedures Manual, [Section 24.3.1](#):

Since this is a general purpose fee, institutions may use it to support any level of operations that would be appropriate for any educational and general fund source.

- **Who pays the fee?**

All students pay the SIF for each semester attended – fall, spring, and/or summer.

- **How is the SIF fee level established?**

The BOR has sole authority to establish the level of this fee. Any changes to the fee do *not* require the input of a student advisory group, as do changes to other mandatory fees. Proposed changes to *all other* mandatory fees must be reviewed by Georgia Tech's [Mandatory Student Fee Advisory Committee](#).

- **When and why was the fee established?**

In December of 2008, the BOR initially set the SIF at \$100 for the spring 2009 semester as a one-time fee ([Dec 3, 2008 BOR meeting](#)). The Board made the fee permanent at its June 2009 meeting. Originally this was intended to be a temporary measure as part of the BOR's plan to help offset substantial state budget cuts. These cuts began in Fiscal Year 2009 after the beginning of the year. The intent was to minimize reductions that would have affected students' education.

- **Why did the BOR approve a new fee to offset state budget cuts instead of just increasing tuition?**

It is assumed that the BOR used this tool instead of a tuition increase to avoid an impact on the HOPE Scholarship, which is challenged by declining revenue and increased demand. Mandatory fees are no longer covered by HOPE.

- **What has been the history of increases in the SIF approved by the BOR?**

Since state budget cuts lasted for four years (2009-2012), Georgia Tech’s and other state institutions’ state funding bases declined drastically. Georgia Tech lost over 30% of its state funding during this time period equaling nearly \$100 million in reductions. The BOR approved increases to the SIF and made it permanent to ensure the continued success of USG institutions in educating their students. Below is the history of the fee since the spring 2009 semester. After the increase in the fall of 2011 to \$544 per semester, the SIF remained the same until the Fall of 2015 when it was reduced by \$100 for graduate students only. Until the Fall of 2015 the BOR had not permitted a differential between the undergraduate and graduate SIF. The fee is reduced for students taking four hours or less.

Semester	Undergrad	Grad Fee	Notes
Spring 2009	\$100	\$100	Temporary
Fall 2009	\$100	\$100	Permanent
Spring 2010	\$200	\$200	Permanent
Fall 2010*	\$194	\$194	Permanent
Spring 2011	\$194	\$194	Permanent
Fall 2011- Fall 2014	\$544	\$544	Permanent
Fall 2015	\$544	\$444	Permanent

* For fall 2010 only the BOR permitted institutions to “trade” increases in other mandatory fees for a reduction in the SIF. GT requested and received approval for an increase in the Student Health Fee of \$6 and the accompanying reduction in the SIF.

- **How does this fee impact graduate students?**

Whereas tuition for Graduate Research and Teaching Assistants (GRAs and GTAs) is included as part of one's assistantship, fees are paid by graduate students directly out of stipends they are paid for teaching or research. The fee impacts the finances of many graduate students and may be a detrimental factor in graduate student retention and recruitment. Georgia Tech attempted to reduce the impact by increasing the GT share of Graduate Health Insurance to be comparable to faculty and staff and also increasing the minimum stipend payments paid by colleges and other campus units that hire GTAs and GRAs. Most recently the Institute gained approval to reduce the SIF for Grad Students by \$100 to \$444 beginning in the Fall of 2015. Georgia Tech is continuing to work closely with the BOR to further reduce the SIF for graduate students. GT’s plan is for the fee to be phased out and rolled into tuition over a five year period. See the Graduate [SGA link](#) on the SIF.

- **What are Georgia Tech's other mandatory fees?**

Georgia Tech's other mandatory fees, which are all earmarked for specific functions, are the following: transportation, student activities, athletics, student health, and recreation facility (to help to pay back the debt on the Campus Recreation Center). Current mandatory fee levels are found [here](#) and explanations of the fees [here](#).