

Reverse Transfer: Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines

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Responsible Official: Provost and Vice President of Academic

Official: Affairs

Responsible Office: Enrollment Management

POLICIES

Policy Statement

It is the policy of Austin Peay State University to allow reverse transfer between the university and the State community colleges.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to serve as a framework for Reverse Transfer across the State of Tennessee and Austin Peay State University.

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Definitions

Potential Reverse Transfer Degree

Potential Reverse Transfer Degree candidates are those students who:

- are currently enrolled at a Tennessee four-year institution and were previously enrolled as degree seeking students at a Tennessee community college or other Tennessee associate degree-granting institution;

- have earned a minimum of 15 college credits towards an associate degree at the associate degree-granting institution; and
- have earned a combined minimum of 60 total college-level credits.

Screening Degree Audit

The screening degree audit will be run on those students who are currently enrolled at a Tennessee four-year institution and were previously enrolled at a Tennessee community college or other Tennessee associate degree-granting institution as degree seeking students, have earned a combined minimum of 60 total college-level credits and have successfully transferred a minimum of 12 college credits towards an associate degree at the associate degree-granting institution.

Procedures

Introduction

- A. On April 4, 2012, Tennessee Governor Bill Haslam signed HB 2827 which amended Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49 relative to higher education. This amendment added the following language to Section 1 Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49, Chapter 7, Part 1:

The community colleges of the board of regents system are authorized and encouraged to enter into reverse articulation or reverse transfer agreements with the universities of the board of regents and the University of Tennessee systems and with private institutions of higher education that are accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. The universities of the board of regents and the University of Tennessee systems are authorized and encouraged to enter into reverse articulation or reverse transfer agreements with the community colleges of the board of regents system.
- B. In July 2012, a taskforce was convened to develop and implement a Reverse Transfer Process across the State of Tennessee. The original taskforce was comprised of members from the Tennessee Higher Education Commission, the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR), the Tennessee Independent Colleges and Universities Association (TICUA), and the University of Tennessee (UT) systems.
- C. The full taskforce defined Reverse Transfer as “a credit review of degree seeking students who transfer from a community college to a four year institution prior to receipt of the

associate's degree to determine if and when the students complete the associate's degree requirements and, if so, to award them an associate's degree." While the remaining courses required for the associate degree are completed at a Tennessee four-year institution, it is the responsibility of the associate degree-granting institution to verify degree completion and to award the two- year degree.

- D. Subsequently, workgroups were created and charged to develop components of the overall process. The workgroups included members from THEC, TICUA, TBR, and UT. The Policies/Procedures workgroup was charged with the development of academic policy/procedures that will serve as the framework for Reverse Transfer across the State of Tennessee and among the three systems of higher education (Tennessee Board of Regents, University of Tennessee, and the Tennessee Independent Colleges and Universities).

Participation

- A. Austin Peay State University will participate in Reverse Transfer as encouraged and supported by the State of Tennessee HB 2827. TICUA institutions may choose to participate. Those state institutions that have existing Reverse Transfer agreements with other state institutions must participate in the statewide solution. However, state institutions may develop free-standing reverse transfer agreements with non-participating TICUA institutions.

Governance and Compliance

- A. The UT-TBR-TICUA Articulation and Transfer Council will have oversight of the Reverse Transfer process and policies and will review the policy and its impact annually. Oversight responsibilities include, but are not limited to, assessment and evaluation of the process, reporting to the Legislature, and modifications in the process/policies as needed.
- B. The University of Tennessee Center for Business and Economic Research (CBER) will house and maintain the server and will have primary responsibility for the stored data (demographic and academic) as well as the data extracted for evaluation and reporting purposes. CBER will maintain the confidentiality and integrity of the data and will have primary responsibility for research and reporting related to Reverse Transfer. Data collected for the Reverse Transfer process will not be integrated into or become part of the Tennessee Longitudinal Data System (TLDS) unless approved by the President on each campus. CBER will collaborate with THEC, TBR, TICUA, UT, the Lumina Foundation (Tennessee's grant project

founder), and the Office of Community College Leadership and Research (OCCRL) at the University of Illinois Champagne-Urbana campus throughout the evaluation and reporting processes. The “Credit When It’s Due” (CWID) founders contracted OCCRL to document a baseline analysis, policy change/implementation and aggregate student outcomes for the CWID project nation-wide. In addition, each campus/system may designate an individual to have access to individual records for their students to conduct additional research and/or to validate the number of students receiving an associate degree and their credit hours reported to THEC.

- C. Policies/procedures must be in compliance with the standards of accreditation set forth by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC).
 - 1. Reverse Transfer candidates must complete “...at least 25 percent of the credit hours required for the degree” at the Tennessee institution awarding the associate’s degree. (SACSCOC 3.5.2)
 - 2. Reverse Transfer candidates must adhere to the Catalog requirements established by the degree-granting institution. (SACSCOC 3.5.3)
- D. All student information shared between and among institutions to facilitate Reverse Transfer awards must be in compliance with FERPA guidelines and applicable State of Tennessee statutes.

Policies

- A. The Tennessee Higher Education Commission will work to identify and make any necessary modifications to the funding formula to reflect a spirit of full collaboration among Tennessee institutions of higher education and reward participating Tennessee institutions accordingly. Reverse Transfer, an initiative to promote the educational attainment of adult learners through the full cooperation and collaboration among Tennessee institutions of higher education, will result in the generation of student and institutional outcomes where none previously existed.
- B. The University is responsible for the accuracy of Equivalency Tables and degree audits. Equivalency tables and degree audits must be reviewed and updated annually, or as new programs are approved.
- C. The “last hours” policy shall be waived for Reverse Transfer degree candidates at all Tennessee institutions. Requiring

students to complete any number of “last hours” at the community college would potentially place undue hardship on the student and would be counter-intuitive to the intent of Reverse Transfer.

- D. To adhere to the FERPA guidelines, the University must have written permission from the student to send the results of the screening degree audit to the associate degree-granting institution for reverse transfer degree audit purposes. The process to obtain student consent must include a reasonable way to identify the individual and authenticate the identity of the student as the source of the consent to the disclosure of the education records. Schools must obtain written consent (e.g., hard copy, electronic consent) from those students who appear to have the credits for associate degree completion prior to sending the results of the screening degree audit to the associate degree-granting institution. The communication to the student must include the purpose for sending the information, the institution to which the student’s information will be sent, and the option to revoke participation in the reverse transfer process at any time. Additionally, four year institutions may provide a section on the transfer application to allow for the exchange of the screening degree audit results for reverse transfer audit purposes or to opt out of the reverse transfer degree audit.
- E. If a Reverse Transfer degree candidate attended more than one associate degree- granting institution prior to transferring to the University, the degree confirming institution will be the institution where the student earned the most credits, provided the student earned a minimum of 15 credits at that institution to meet the SACSCOC residency requirement (SACSCOC 3.5.2) and the student meets the requirements for an associate degree at that institution. In the event the student has earned the same number of credits and meets the residency and degree requirements at two or more institutions, the institution that the student attended most recently will be considered as the degree-granting institution.
1. The University may not accept all credits earned at the associate degree-granting institution (e.g., grades of “D”) that may in fact count towards the associate degree. Therefore, a threshold of “successfully transferred” credits that is less than the minimum residency credits required at the associate degree-granting institution was established to capture and include those students who may have not had all earned degree credits accepted by the four-year institution. Students meeting this threshold are considered

to be “close” to degree completion for purposes of the screening degree audit. The associate degree-granting institution will still have responsibility for the official degree audit and degree conferral, if the student is eligible.

- F. Students will not be assessed a fee for to have the screening degree audit report sent to the associate degree-granting institutions in the degree audit process of Reverse Transfer.
- G. Reverse Transfer degree recipients will not be assessed a graduation fee at the associate degree-granting institution.
- H. The University will designate a contact person for Reverse Transfer. The contact person will serve as a point of information to students, faculty, and advisors.
- I. Students are afforded due process under the appeals process and procedures outlined in the Catalog at the appropriate institution.
- J. Once a degree is conferred (baccalaureate or associate), the student will not be considered further for the reverse transfer process.

Procedures

- A. Initially, Reverse Transfer degree awards will be limited to those degree programs that are currently identified as a Tennessee Transfer Pathway. Community Colleges also have the discretion to award the A.A. and A.S. General Studies degrees as reverse awards where applicable. All other associate degree programs should be added to the Reverse Transfer process as quickly as feasible.
 - 1. Additionally, all two-year degrees may be considered for and awarded through Reverse Transfer. While it is likely that the majority of Reverse Transfer degrees awarded will be either A.A. or A.S. degrees, it is possible that a student could complete the A.A.S., A.F.A, or A.S.T. degree requirements at a four-year institution, in which case the degree eligibility assessment would be made at the two-year institution.
- B. The degree awarding process will be institution-initiated.
 - 1. Reports will be generated each spring and fall semester (for May and December degree awards, respectively) to identify potential degree candidates and sent to the associate degree-granting institution for a degree audit and confirmation of degree. Potential degree candidates will be identified through a match of descriptive attributes which may include

- full name, permanent address, birth date, or other identifiers.
2. The associate degree-granting institution will send eligible students a letter of degree confirmation, information regarding participation in graduation ceremonies, and then mail diploma. Students will not need to file degree application for the associate degree.
 3. A student may decline the degree.
 4. Students being awarded a degree and the hours credited for the degree at the community college and four-year school will be recorded in the data set maintained by CBER.
- C. The associate degree-granting institution will notify, in writing, those students whose associate degree audit indicates outstanding academic requirements for the Reverse Transfer associate degree and any “holds” the student may have.
1. Students will be notified of their progress toward the Reverse Transfer degree twice a year (spring and fall) to coincide with the reporting schedule identified in Procedure B.2.
 2. It is the student’s responsibility to complete any outstanding academic requirements within his/her Catalog time limit in order to be considered for a Reverse Transfer degree.
 3. It is the student’s responsibility to clear any and all “holds” to be considered for a Reverse Transfer degree.
- D. Website information for Reverse Transfer will be developed with input from UT, TBR, and TICUA, and will be located on the Tennessee Transfer Pathway website which is maintained by Tennessee Technological University. Each participating associate- degree granting institution will have a Reverse Transfer page that will include a link to the Reverse Transfer website. The institution’s Reverse Transfer contact person’s name, email, and telephone number as well as general information about Reverse Transfer will be included on the institution page.

Guidelines

The general education assessment requirement may be waived for Reverse Transfer degree candidates at the discretion of the degree-granting institution.

1. The 2010 Tennessee Higher Education Commission’s Quality Assurance guidelines concerning General Education Assessment (p. 7) indicate: “Institutions may exclude students from testing for ‘good cause.’ Good cause exemptions must be supported by documentation from the institution’s chief academic officer. Exceptions should not

be approved for simple inconvenience. This material should be available for review by Commission staff if needed.”

http://www.tn.gov/assets/entities/thec/attachments/PF_2010-15_Guidebook_Mar_17_2011.pdf

2. Reverse Transfer degree recipients will then complete the general education assessment as graduating seniors from a Tennessee baccalaureate degree program.
3. Therefore, community colleges will not be penalized under THEC Performance Funding Quality Assurance guidelines for waiving the general education assessment requirement for Reverse Transfer degree recipients (See Policy A in this document).
 1. Upper division courses completed at a four-year institution may be considered for lower division course substitution on a case-by-case basis and in accordance with current policy at the associate degree-granting institution.
 2. Reverse Transfer degree recipients may participate in the graduation ceremonies at the degree-granting institution. Students who choose to participate in the ceremony will be responsible for cap and gown rental.

Revision Dates

APSU Policy 2:024 – Issued: March 8, 2017

Subject Areas:

Academic	Finance	General	Human Resources	Information Technology	Student Affairs
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Approved

President: signature on file
