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**TITLE 133
PROCEDURAL RULE**

WEST VIRGINIA HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY COMMISSION

SERIES 60

WEST VIRGINIA REVERSE TRANSFER PROGRAM

§133-60-1. General.

1.1. Scope. -- This policy establishes the process by which a student may be awarded an associate degree which was begun at a West Virginia public institution offering an associate degree but was completed through a West Virginia public four-year college or university.

1.2. Authority. – West Virginia Code §18B-1D-4.

1.3. Filing Date. – July 6, 2015.

1.4. Effective Date. – August 6, 2015.

§133-60-2. Purpose.

2.1. Reverse transfer is a strategy for increasing the completion rates of students. Students often transfer credit hours from two-year to four-year institutions of higher education. Many students complete an associate degree before transferring to a four-year institution and many others do not earn an associate degree but transfer to another institution where they complete a baccalaureate degree. Some students, however, do not complete either the associate or baccalaureate degree despite earning a significant number of college credits. These students are often left without a postsecondary credential even though they have earned enough credits to be eligible for an associate degree.

2.2. This policy establishes a statewide reverse transfer process that allows any student who has completed the requirements for an associate degree, combining credit hours earned at a public higher education institution in West Virginia that offers an associate degree with hours earned at a public four-year higher education institution, to be awarded that associate degree.

2.3. This policy provides the process by which students who have met degree requirements of an associate degree program can be identified and awarded their first associate degree if that work has been completed at the four-year institution. The application of the reverse transfer process ensures that all eligible students have the opportunity to be awarded a first associate degree that reflects their educational efforts and allows them to compete more successfully in other academic arenas and the workforce.

2.4. As of the effective date noted above, the West Virginia Reverse Transfer (WVRT) policy supersedes all existing reverse transfer agreements. Those students involved in another reverse transfer agreement at the time of the effective date of this policy may choose to complete program requirements under the previous agreement. Students will also be given the option to transition to the new WVRT program, thereby selecting the less restrictive agreement.

§133-60-3. Definitions.

3.1. Degree-Granting Institution (DGI) -- The degree-granting institution is the two-year institution that will award the associate degree to the reverse transfer student. If a student has earned credit hours at more than one institution offering an associate degree, the degree-granting institution will be the institution where the

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student has accumulated the greatest number of credit hours toward the associate degree. The degree-granting institution will count reverse transfer students in its yearly graduation report.

3.2. Host institution -- The host institution is the institution that will transfer credits back to the degree granting institution. The host institution may be either a four-year or another two-year institution.

3.3. West Virginia Reverse Transfer (WVRT) -- West Virginia Reverse Transfer refers to the statewide program that seeks to identify students who are often left without a postsecondary credential even though they have earned enough credits to be eligible for an associate degree.

3.4. WVRT eligible student -- The WVRT student is the individual who has earned 15 or more college-level, degree-applicable, transferable credits from a two-year institution and who does not currently hold an associate degree or higher. Upon entry into WVRT, the student seeks to complete the requirements for and be awarded the appropriate associate's degree.

§133-60-4. Eligibility and Residency Requirements.

4.1. Student Eligibility.

4.1.a. Students are not eligible for participation in the WVRT if they currently possess an associate degree or higher.

4.1.b. A student may be simultaneously awarded an associate degree through WVRT and a baccalaureate degree.

4.2. Residency Requirement.

4.2.a. The WVRT student is required to have successfully completed a minimum of 15 credit hours at the West Virginia public institution that will award the associate's degree. Fifteen credit hours from a single institution is the minimum residency for the WVRT.

§133-60-5. Institutional Participation.

5.1. All West Virginia public higher education institutions shall participate as full members in WVRT.

5.2. The submission of necessary student-level data, for reporting and accountability, is a condition of participation in the WVRT program. At a minimum, this includes data on eligible students, participating students, and completing students in order to assess effectiveness of the program.

§133-60-6. Participation in the Reverse Transfer Program.

6.1. For the initial year of the program's implementation, the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission (Commission) and the West Virginia Council for Community and Technical College Education (Council) will identify potential students for participation in the WVRT program and will notify the participating host institution. After the first year of implementation, it is the host institution's responsibility to provide the WVRT option to new transfer students from associate degree-granting institutions.

6.1.a. Upon receiving all appropriate information, the DGI will contact the identified eligible student and provide the student with information about the program.

6.1.a.1. The student may elect to pursue the WVRT program by indicating to the host institution to release the student's transcript to the DGI.

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6.1.a.2. If a student chooses to be removed from the program or graduates from the DGI, this will be recorded by the DGI and reported as requested by the Commission or the Council.

6.1.a.3. Host institutions will identify students (active and inactive), those who have completed 15 hours with a single institution but never completed a degree, via an automated search and include them in information relayed to the DGI for contact.

§133-60-7. Procedures for the Reverse Transfer Program.

7.1. The transcripts of WVRT eligible students will be distributed by the host institution, as necessary, to the DGI based upon an initial minimum number of transferrable credit hours completed (e.g., 60 credit hours) and again at established intervals after the initial submission (e.g., annually).

7.1.a. Transcripts submitted from the four-year to the two-year institution for the purposes of conducting a degree audit to determine student eligibility will be sent directly from institution to institution.

7.1.a.1. The release of transcripts will be in accordance with the host institution's policies.

7.2. The DGI is responsible for reviewing the eligible WVRT student's transcripts and records and for awarding the degree.

7.2.a. The acceptance of transfer credit will be determined by the DGI.

7.2.b. The requirements for degree completion will be determined by the DGI and that information will be identified to the WVRT student. DGI's are encouraged to substitute any institution-unique course requirements.

7.3. There will be no time limit on students completing the associate degree through the WVRT. Candidates must meet all institutional degree and programmatic requirements at the DGI.

§133-60-8. Determination of Degree-Granting Institution.

8.1. The DGI shall be the two-year institution where the student has completed the greatest number of transferable credits to the four-year institution. An institution can award reverse transfer degrees only if the student has earned a minimum of 15 credit hours at that institution.

8.2. If the student has earned the same number of transferable credits at two or more institutions the most recently attended institution is identified as the DGI. If multiple options still exist at this point, the student will select the DGI for the associate degree.

8.3. The acceptance of transfer credit will be determined solely by the DGI.

§133-60-9. Degree Awards.

9.1. The WVRT will apply to associate degrees as identified by the DGI.

9.2. There will be nothing to differentiate the WVRT awarded degree from any other degree awarded by the institution on the student's diploma or transcript.

§133-60-10. Appeal, Review, and Accountability.

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10.1. If the WVRT student has a disagreement with DGI decision, that student may appeal said decision by utilizing the student academic affairs appeals process at the DGI.

10.2. The West Virginia Reverse Transfer Policy between public two-year and four-year institutions will be reviewed periodically at the discretion of the Commission and the Council.

10.3. The annual submission of data for both reporting and accountability purposes is necessary for the success of this policy. All institutions will submit data to the Commission and the Council regarding eligible students, participating students, completing students, and other data necessary to assess the effectiveness of WVRT.