

**TITLE 133
LEGISLATIVE RULE
WEST VIRGINIA HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY COMMISSION**

ADMINISTRATIVE EXEMPTION

SERIES 64

§133-64-1. General.

1.1. Scope. – This legislative rule establishes the process by which the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission (Commission) will grant administrative exemption status to and remove administrative exemption status from the State’s baccalaureate institutions of higher education.

1.2. Authority. – West Virginia Code §18B-1-1f(c).

1.3. Filing Date. – April 15, 2026.

1.4. Effective Date. – May 15, 2026.

1.5. This rule shall terminate and have no further force or effect on August 1, 2031.

§133-64-2. Definitions.

2.1. “Administratively exempted schools” means state colleges and universities:

2.1.a. That achieve and maintain three of the five following criteria:

2.1.a.1. Graduation rate: A three-year average graduation rate of not less than 45 percent;

2.1.a.2. Retention rate: A three-year average retention rate of not less than 60 percent;

2.1.a.3. Credit head count enrollment: A three-year credit head count enrollment increase, or a decrease of not more than five percent over the same period;

2.1.a.4. Days of cash reserved: A three-year average of not less than 50 days cash reserved;

2.1.a.5. Composite Financial Index: A Composite Financial Index of not less than one as reported in the college and university’s audited financial statements; or

2.1.b. Whose governing board requests a review by the Chancellor of any special circumstances and the Commission grants administratively exempted status based on those special circumstances as verified by the Chancellor after his or her review.

2.2. “Composite Financial Index” means the benchmarking tool used by the Higher Learning Commission as a financial indicator and developed specifically for the higher education industry and is a combination of several different ratios, each of which is comprised of data that, when analyzed further, can provide insight into an institution’s financial health and inform decision-making processes.

2.3. “Credit headcount enrollment” means the total number of unique students, but not counting dual-enrolled high school students, who enrolled in credit-bearing classes during the fall, spring, and summer terms in a given academic year at a specific institution.

2.4. “Days of cash reserved” means the audited end of fiscal year cash balance, multiplied by 365, and then divided by the audited total expenses less depreciation, and less other post-employment benefit and pension liability expenses.

2.5. “Graduation rates” means the proportion of first time in college students who obtain a bachelor’s degree within six years, as further defined by and reported to the Commission.

2.6. “Retention rates” means the proportion of first-time, fall term, full-time freshmen students who are in continuing enrollment in the fall term of the next succeeding year.

2.7. “State college and university” shall have the same meaning as provided in West Virginia Code §18B-1-2.

§133-64-3. Procedure for Requesting Status as an Administratively Exempt School.

3.1. Requesting Administratively Exempt Status. – Any State college or university may apply to the Commission for designation as an administratively exempt school by its governing board submitting a letter to the Chancellor requesting such status and setting forth which of the criteria established in West Virginia Code §18B-1-1f(b) and reiterated in subsection 2.1 above the college or university meets. Applications must be submitted to the Commission between January 1 and January 31 for the following academic year.

3.2. Reviewing Administratively Exempt School Status. – Upon receipt of a request for administrative exemption, the Commission shall verify that the requesting institution meets the statutory criteria using data submitted by the college or university to, and validated by, the Commission.

3.3. Institutions shall provide promptly upon request from the Commission or Chancellor any information to support the Commission’s review of the institution’s performance as an administratively exempt college or university.

§133-64-4. Procedure for Granting or Denying Status as an Administratively Exempt School.

4.1. Approval of Administratively Exempt School Status. – Upon verification that an institution meets three of the five requirements to be designated as an administratively exempt school, the Commission shall vote on the matter at its next regularly scheduled meeting.

§133-64-5. Procedure for Reviewing Administratively Exempt Status Once Granted.

5.1. Review of Administrative Exempt School Status Institutions. – Commission staff will review annually all criteria, either statutory or special circumstances, for administratively exempt school status for the administratively exempt institutions.

5.2. If, during its annual review, Commission staff determines that an administratively exempt school has failed to meet one or more of the criteria by which it initially qualified for administrative exemption status, but that it also now meets one or more of the other criteria that would allow it to maintain its administrative exemption, Commission staff will notify the institution that it is being allowed to maintain its administrative exemption status under the newly met criteria.

5.3. Each year, as part of the statutorily mandated annual reauthorization process established in 133 C.S.R. 52, *Annual Reauthorization of Degree Granting Institutions*, the reauthorization review committee shall determine whether administratively exempted institutions are meeting at least three of the exemption criteria specified in Section 2 of this rule.

5.3.a. Those administratively exempted institutions meeting three or more of the criteria in the review process shall be reported in the annual reauthorization resolution to the Commission as qualified to maintain administratively exempt status.

5.3.b. Those administratively exempt institutions that fail to meet at least three of the exemption criteria shall be reported in the annual reauthorization resolution to the Commission as failing to meet the requirements to maintain the administratively exempt status. The institution shall be formally notified of this finding by the process set forth in Section 6 below.

§133-64-6. Revoking Administratively Exempt School Status Procedure.

6.1. Upon the annual review, institutions that do not meet three of the five requirements for administratively exempt school status, the Chancellor will notify the President of the institution that they no longer meet the requirements for the designation and that the institution has one year to meet the requirements again.

6.2. Upon the second consecutive annual review where institutions do not meet three of the five requirements for exempt status, the Chancellor will notify the President that the institution no longer is eligible and that the institution may have its administratively exempt status revoked after thirty (30) days from the date of the notice.

6.3. Upon the annual review, if it is determined that the special circumstances that the administratively exempted status is based on no longer exist, the Chancellor will notify the President that the institution no longer is eligible and that the institution may have its administratively exempt status revoked after thirty (30) days from the date of the notice.

6.4. After 30 days have passed following the notification that an institution no longer meets the requirements for exempt status, the Commission will vote at its next regularly scheduled meeting on whether to revoke the institution's administratively exempted status.