

**Policy Title:** Reverse Transfer Policies

**Policy Type:** Academic **New/revised:** Revised

**Old Policy #:** 2:02:00:02 Policy

**Approval level:** ☒ Board of Trustees  
☐ President  
☐ Vice President  
☐ Other (specify here)

### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to serve as a framework for reverse transfer at East Tennessee State University.

ETSU will participate in reverse transfer as encouraged and supported by the State of Tennessee HB 2827 to allow students who have transferred to ETSU from a community college before earning an associate degree to earn an academic credential if they so choose.

### Policy

- I. ETSU participates in reverse transfer as encouraged and supported by the State of Tennessee HB 2827 to allow students who have transferred to ETSU from a community college before earning an associate degree to earn an academic credential if they so choose.
- II. 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.
- III. ETSU 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.
- IV. To adhere to the FERPA guidelines, ETSU 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. ETSU 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, ETSU 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.
- V. If a reverse transfer degree candidate attended more than one associate degree-granting institution prior to transferring to ETSU, 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 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.

- A. ETSU 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 ETSU.
- B. 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. The degree-granting institution will conduct the screening degree audit if the student meets the following criteria.
  - 1. Is currently enrolled at ETSU and was previously enrolled as a degree seeking student at a Tennessee community college or other similar institution in another state;
  - 2. Has earned a minimum of 15 college credits towards an associate degree at the associate degree-granting institution; and
  - 3. Has earned a combined minimum of 60 college-level credits.
- VI. Students will not be assessed fees for screening degree audit reports sent to associate degree-granting institutions.
- VII. Reverse transfer degree recipients will not be assessed a graduation fee at the associate degree-granting institution.
- VIII. Each community college and ETSU will designate a contact person for reverse transfer. The contact person will serve as a point of information for students, faculty, and advisors.
  - A. Students are afforded due process under the appeals process and procedures outlined in the Catalog at the appropriate institution.
  - B. Once a degree is conferred (baccalaureate or associate), the student will not be considered further for the reverse transfer process.

#### Notes:

##### Background

- 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 task force was convened to develop and implement a reverse transfer Process across the State of Tennessee. The original task force 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 task force 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).
  - E. 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.

3/24/2017 – approved by the Board of Trustees.