

## West Virginia

Higher Education Policy Commission  
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- 1) Does the state have an identifiable “P-16” effort visible? Who is in charge of this effort?  
Governor Joe Manchin, by Executive Order has created the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Jobs Cabinet. This cabinet will focus on promoting a seamless education system that connects every level of education from early childhood to graduate study and encompasses job training and lifelong learning. First Lady Gayle Manchin and Ralph Baxter, chairman and CEO of Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP, serve as co-chairs of the Cabinet.
  - a) Does the agency include a utility or function on its website designed explicitly to help potential students locate an appropriate college or university to attend?  
Yes, the web site for the WV Higher Education Policy Commission, [www.wvhepc.org](http://www.wvhepc.org), provides a direct link to College for West Virginians, [www.collegeforwv.com](http://www.collegeforwv.com). This site provides information for preparing, applying and paying for college. Both web sites provide direct links to college web sites.
- 2) Is a mandated or recommended college preparatory curriculum in place in the state’s public high schools?  
Yes, the State Board of Education has developed a Professional Pathways for students interested in going to college.

Our statewide policy on baccalaureate admissions specifies the core high school units that students must complete for regular admission. Our baccalaureate admission standards which have been revised effective August 2008 are as follows:

English – 4 units (including courses in grammar, composition and literature)  
Social Studies – 3 units (including U.S. History)  
Mathematics – 4 units (three units must be Algebra 1 and higher)  
Science – 3 units (all courses must college preparatory lab science, preferably including units from biology, chemistry and physics)  
Arts – 1 unit  
Foreign Language – 2 units (two courses of the same foreign language)

We prescribe nothing beyond this. The State Board of Education has a Professional Pathways for high school students interested in going to college. The course requirements for this pathway essentially mirror our admission requirements. We have another Policy on “Preparation of Students for College.” It does not specify any curriculum requirements. It

only suggests the knowledge and skills that are necessary to be prepared for college. Specific course work is not addressed.

- 3) Has the state articulated a set of explicit competencies or skills that define what it means to be “college ready?”

Approved policies of the Higher Education Policy Commission include Series 24, *Preparation of Students for College*. This policy sets forth minimum levels of knowledge, skill and competency a student needs to possess to be prepared for college.

- 4) Are systematic programs in place in the state that encourage students to accelerate progress by taking college-level courses while still enrolled in high school?

The West Virginia Code mandates that more opportunities should be available for advanced high school students to obtain college credit prior to high school graduation. Institutions of higher education have been encouraged to increase their course offerings in the high school. Series 19, *Guidelines for the Offering of College Courses for High School Students*, has been adopted by Commission and the Council for Community and Technical College Education to provide guidance to the colleges.

- 5) Is there a statewide policy present that governs placement into college-level courses or remedial courses? Is a standard set of placement tests recommended or required? If yes, are common cut scores for placement decisions in place or do institutions get to set their own?

Yes. The Commission and the Council have adopted Series 21, *Freshman Assessment and Placement Standards*. This policy does recognize specific placements tests and provides for common cut scores.

- 6) Is there a visible statewide transfer and articulation policy? Does this cover all institutions or only public institutions? What are the specifics of this policy?

Yes. The Commission and the Council have adopted Series 17, *Transferability of Credits and Grades at the Undergraduate Level*. Key provisions include:

- a. Undergraduate level credits and grades at any public institution in WV shall generally transferable to any other such institution
  - b. At least 64 and up to 72 hours of credits and grades completed at public community and technical colleges or regional campuses shall be transferable to any public baccalaureate institution in WV
  - c. Students completing two-year associate degrees at WV public institutions in WV shall generally, upon transfer to a baccalaureate institution, have junior level status
  - d. Up to 32 hours of undergraduate coursework in general education may transfer in and count toward meeting general education requirements.
- a) Is the transfer/articulation policy accompanied by a statewide transferable general education requirement? Does this name actual courses and/or credits? Are specific competencies identified that the student should meet through this coursework? Is testing used to guarantee student competency for progress or transfer?

Series 17 does provide for the maintenance of a Core Coursework Transfer Agreement. This Agreement lists specific general studies courses at each institution which have been approved for inclusion in the Agreement. The courses fall into four general areas; 1) English composition, communications and literature, 2) mathematics, 3) natural science, and 4) social science.

The policy does not provide for any specific competencies that students must meet nor does it provide for any type of testing.

- b) More specifically, does an AA or AS degree from a community college in the state meet general education requirements at public four-year institutions? What mechanisms are in place to make sure this actually happens?

Series 17 and the Core Coursework Transfer Agreement do ensure that Community college graduates with an AA or AS degree can meet general education requirements at four-year institutions. The Core Coursework Transfer Agreement is widely disseminated to students and published in official campus materials. Regular statewide meetings of Academic Officers and Registrars help ensure that the Agreement is being followed. Registrars have indicated that the Agreement has eased the transfer process.

- c) Does credit from transfer courses meet specific course requirements at the transfer institution (e.g. American History counts for American History) or do just the credits transfer to count against the total needed for graduation?

They meet specific course requirements.

- 7) Are there statewide test-out or competency-based provisions that will allow a student to accelerate progress toward a degree?

No. The Commission and the Council, however, have both approved statewide programs, at the baccalaureate and associate degree level respectively, that provide for the awarding of experiential credit. The programs are designed primarily for adult students who may have life and work experiences that can be equated to traditional classroom learning.

- 8) Does the state have an easily-accessible state-supported alternative institution that allows students to complete their degrees more quickly or conveniently than through attendance at a traditional public institution?

No.

- a) Does the state have an accessible central bank or catalog of on-line courses contributed by many institutions that enable students to do “one-stop shopping” for electronic courses?

No, but West Virginia does participate in the Electronic Campus operated by the Southern Regional Education Board. Institutions nominate on-line courses for listing with the Electronic Campus. A statewide committee approves the courses for listing after ensuring they meet established guidelines.

9) Does the state provide incentives to institutions for improvements in degree production or graduation rates? For minimizing the number of students graduating with excessive numbers of credits (e.g. more than 120 SCH)?

Degree production and graduate rates are elements of the institutional compacts. The state review of the compacts may impact the level of tuition and fees increases an institution may impose.

10) Does the state provide incentives for students who successfully complete their degrees (e.g. tuition rebates or cash bonuses)? For students who complete their programs without amassing additional credits (e.g. within 120 SCH)? Are there financial disincentives for students to take more than the number of credits needed to graduate (e.g. full or out-of-state tuition)?

No.