



WEST VIRGINIA COUNCIL FOR COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE EDUCATION

Robert L. Brown, Chair • James L. Skidmore, Chancellor

2011 JUN 15 AM 9:44

OFFICE WEST VIRGINIA
SECRETARY OF STATE

June 15, 2011

The Honorable Natalie E. Tennant
Secretary of State
Building 1, Suite 157K
1900 Kanawha Boulevard, East
Charleston, WV 25305-0770

Dear Madam Secretary,

At its meeting on June 10, 2011, the West Virginia Council for Community and Technical College Education approved a resolution to discontinue the following procedural rule:

Title 135, Series 7: *Standards for Degree Designation and General Education Requirements for Community and Technical College Degrees*

Most of the content of this rule was incorporated into a new procedural rule, Title 135, Series 11, *Degree Designation, General Education Requirements, New Program Approval, and Discontinuance of Existing Programs*, which was approved by the Council for final filing at the June 10 meeting as well. Attached you will find a copy of the agenda item and resolution as approved by the Council along with a copy of Series 7.

Please contact me if you have questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James L. Skidmore". The signature is written in a cursive style.

James L. Skidmore
Chancellor

FILED

2011 JUN 15 AM 9: 24

**TITLE 135
PROCEDURAL RULE
WEST VIRGINIA COUNCIL FOR COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL
COLLEGE EDUCATION**

OFFICE OF WEST VIRGINIA
SECRETARY OF STATE

**SERIES 7
STANDARDS FOR DEGREE DESIGNATIONS AND GENERAL EDUCATION
REQUIREMENTS FOR COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE DEGREES**

§135-7-1. General.

1.1. Scope. -- This rule establishes standards for community and technical colleges to determine the appropriate degree designation for academic programs and the general education requirements for the respective degrees.

1.2. Authority. -- W. Va. Code §18B-2B-6.

1.3. Filing Date. -- December 6, 2004.

1.4. Effective Date. -- January 10, 2005.

§135-7-2. Purpose.

2.1. Certificate and associate degree programs are central to the mission of the community and technical college. They are a means through which the institution develops and maintains integrity in its educational programs. Appropriately defined, these degrees become an integrating force for the institution, set academic standards and goals for achievement of students, and establishes the relationship between the college and other institutions at community college and baccalaureate college levels.

The associate degree program establishes the community college vision of what it means to be an educated person and affirms the college's commitment to program coherence, continuity, and student success. Awarding the associate degree is a way by which an institution indicates the student has completed a program of academic development and has achieved a level of performance reflected in student learning outcomes sufficient to progress to upper division collegiate work or to enter directly into specific occupations in the workplace. The associate

degree is recognized by baccalaureate degree-granting institutions and by employers as a critical indicator a student has demonstrated proficiencies at levels deemed appropriate to enter upper-division college programs or to enter a field of work.

Certificate and associate degree programs must consist of a coherent and sequenced set of courses, including an evaluation procedure that assesses the outcomes of the learning process. In addition, all certificate and associate degree programs must include a complement of general education requirements that define what constitutes an educated person.

Therefore, it is the purpose of this policy to adopt and require the use of nationally standardized nomenclature regarding certificate and associate degrees and the nationally promulgated standards for the general education components of the respective degrees. It is the goal of this policy to ensure a common understanding of the associate degrees awarded by West Virginia community and technical colleges; to promote the transferability and portability of degrees among the colleges and with baccalaureate degree granting institutions; and to foster recognition of the degrees as a respected credential for employment.

§135-7-3. Certificate and Associate Degree Definitions.

There are three nationally recognized associate degree designations adopted for use. Each has a specific purpose and declares the specific intent of those who framed the academic program requirements. The respective degree designations communicate clearly the primary, predetermined goal for the preparation of the student. All three associate degrees require a minimum of sixty-credit hours for completion of

the degree, and the certificate degree requires thirty-credit hours for completion.

3.1. The Associate in Arts (AA) degree

The purpose and intent of this degree are to prepare the student to transfer to an upper division baccalaureate degree program. It gives emphasis to those majoring in the arts, humanities, social sciences, and similar areas. It is the goal of this degree to achieve successful transfer for completion of the bachelor's degree and acceptance at the junior level.

3.2. The Associate in Science (AS) degree

The purpose and intent of this degree are to prepare the student to transfer to an upper division baccalaureate degree program. It gives emphasis to those majoring in the agriculture, engineering and technology, and the sciences with substantial undergraduate requirements in mathematics and the natural sciences. It is the goal of this degree to achieve successful transfer for completion of the bachelor's degree and acceptance at the junior level. While a student may enter directly into employment upon attainment of this degree, the goal of programs that award this degree is successful transfer with junior status.

3.3. The Associate in Applied Science (AAS) degree

The purpose and intent of this degree are to prepare the student to enter directly into employment in a specific career. It gives emphasis to those majoring in occupational programs designed with and through employer advisory committees. It is the goal of this degree to achieve acceptance as an employment credential. While a student may be able to achieve successful transfer of some or all the courses within this degree, the goal of programs that award this degree is successful employment.

3.4. The Certificate Degree [CP] program

The purpose and intent of the certificate degree program are to prepare the student to enter directly into employment in a specific

career and meet the documented workforce needs of local employers. Generally, certificate programs provide the foundation for the associate in applied science (AAS) degree for occupational programs. Like the AAS degree, the goal of certificates is to achieve acceptance as an employment credential.

§135-7-4. General Education Requirements.

4.1. The curriculum is the foundation of certificate and associate degree programs. For students to earn the degrees, the program must consist of a coherent and sequenced set of courses, including an evaluation procedure that assesses the outcomes of the learning process. The program must state the proficiency outcomes required for the students to transfer to baccalaureate institutions and/or achieve career goals.

4.2. Certificate and associate degree programs must include a full complement of general education requirements that define what constitutes an educated person, including essential communication and computation skills. In accordance with national standards, a strong foundation general education curriculum for associate degrees should include courses in the arts, the humanities, mathematics, the natural sciences, and the social sciences. Based on the respective purpose, intent and goal of certificate and associate degrees, the full complement of general education is established as follows.

4.2.1. The Associate in Arts degree: For successful transfer with program emphasis in arts, humanities, social sciences, and similar areas, a substantial component of this degree, at least 45 semester hours of coursework shall be in general education.

4.2.2. The Associate in Science degree: For successful transfer with program emphasis in agriculture, engineering and technology, and the sciences with a substantial undergraduate requirement in mathematics and the natural sciences, a large component of this degree, at least 30 semester hours of coursework shall be in general education.

4.2.3. The Associate in Applied Science degree: For successful entry directly into employment in a specific career and to provide a basic foundation for life-long learning and future career changes, at least 20 semester hours of coursework for this degree shall be in general education.

4.2.4. The Certificate Degree program: As the foundation of the Associate in Applied Science degree and for successful entry into employment in a specific career, at least 6 semester hours of coursework for the certificate shall be in general education.

§135-7-5. Accountability Process.

5.1. General Education Curriculum Policy

Each community and technical college shall file with the Council their institutional policy on general education as approved by the respective Board of Governors. Such institutional policy shall address the college's vision for the common core of learning outcomes that are essential to the definition of an educated person regardless of the field of study undertaken. Such institutional policy shall include the institutional minimum requirements for general education for each certificate and associate degree designation.

5.2. Program Review Component

During the established five-year program review cycle for certificate and associate degrees, each community and technical college shall demonstrate compliance with this Council policy regarding degree designation and general education requirements. Specifically, the institution shall document that the purpose, intent and goals of the program are consistent with the degree designation and the full complement of general education courses support the program learning outcomes.

**WV Council for Community and Technical College Education
Meeting of June 10, 2011**

ITEM: Approval of Series 11, *Degree Designation, General Education Requirements, New Program Approval, and Discontinuance of Existing Programs* as a procedural rule

INSTITUTIONS: All

RECOMMENDED RESOLUTION: *Resolved, that the West Virginia Council for Community and Technical College Education approves Series 11, Degree Designation, General Education Requirements, New Program Approval, and Discontinuance of Existing Programs as previously submitted to and reviewed by the Council on April 14, 2011. Additionally, with approval and implementation of this rule, Series 7, Standards for Degree Designation and General Education Requirements for Community and Technical College Degrees will be discontinued.*

STAFF MEMBER: Kathy Butler

BACKGROUND:

Series 11 entitled *Degree Designation, General Education Requirements, New Program Approval, and Discontinuance of Existing Programs*, is the compilation of two existing procedural rules: the former Series 11, *Submission of Proposals for New Academic Programs and the Discontinuance of Existing Programs*, and Series 7, *Standards for Degree Designation and General Education Requirements for Community and Technical College Degrees*.

The purpose of the revision of the rule is to simplify the procedures for community and technical colleges to attain approval for additional academic programs at their respective colleges. It also clarifies the standards for each degree, including general education and program hour requirements. This procedural rule consolidates information from two existing procedural rules into one concise document.

At its April 14, 2011 meeting, the Council approved the revised procedural rule, Series 11, *Degree Designation, General Education Requirements, New Program Approval, and Discontinuance of Existing Programs*, for filing with the Secretary of State for a thirty-day comment period. Staff received comments related to the revised rule from two

individuals during the comment period. Summaries of the comments and the staff responses are as follows:

Comment: One comment was made in reference to the effective date of implementation: *"Do we know when this would be implemented? Colleges will need significant time to review programs for adjustments in gen ed hours and to seek approval processes for programs that exceed credit hour limits."*

Response: The revised procedural rule will become effective upon Council approval and thirty days after the final filing with the Secretary of State's office. The new rule will be in effect for the review and approval any new Associate in Arts, Associate in Science and Associate in Fine Arts programs submitted after this effective date.

All recently approved programs which have not yet been reviewed via the required three-year post-approval audit will be reviewed for compliance as a component of that audit for newly approved programs.

Existing Council-approved Associate in Arts, Associate in Science or Associate in Fine Arts programs as well as Associate in Applied Science (AAS) programs, which are initially approved at only the institutional level, will be reviewed for compliance as a part of the five-year program review process.

Comment: Section 3.1, Degree Programs, states: Associate degree require a maximum of sixty-credit hours unless otherwise required by accrediting agencies for completion of the degree and the certificate degree requires a maximum of thirty-credit hours for completion unless otherwise required by accrediting agencies. One individual questioned: *"Does this mean that they cannot have more than 60 (or 30) credits unless a licensing board is requiring it? What about if the program hours are not an accrediting requirement but a standard of practice? What will be the validation /approval process for this? Is there an appeal process?"*

Response: Per Section 7 of the rule, institutions are to provide information specific to the proposed academic program. Within this section are guidelines for the required narrative. It is expected that if an institution chooses to propose a program that exceeds the credit hour maximum that it will be able to justify the need for the additional hours in that program. All program proposals are reviewed by CTCS staff and outside consultants prior to developing a recommendation for the Council. As is common practice, if a problem or concern is noted, the institution is given an opportunity to address any concern prior to the staff recommendation to the Council.

Comment: One individual questioned the application of the newly designated nomenclature, "Certificate in Applied Science Degree [CAS] programs," for the specialized curriculum formerly known as certificate programs: *"I didn't think they referred to certificate programs this way as the CAS designation is for masters."*

Response: In an effort to bring greater recognition to the specialized curriculum that is delivered as certificate programs and to provide common language for such programs across the state, it was determined that "Certificate in Applied Science [CAS] degree programs would be used for what we have previously called certificate programs. In the times past, the CAS designation was used for a masters degree - Certificate of Advanced Studies. However, it is no longer used for that graduate curriculum– the Ed.S. or Education Specialist degree has replaced it in recent years.

Comment: In reference to Section 4.2, *"Does 'all changes to existing programs' mean all curricular changes? This could get overwhelming. Could this just be a requirement to update the Chancellor's office when a program is added or deleted?"*

Response: This section of the policy is in reference to Associate in Applied Science and Certificate in Applied Science programs. It is the intent of this policy that all substantial changes to any Associate in Applied Science and Certificate in Applied Science programs be reported to the Chancellor's office as well as the addition or deletion of any occupational programs. This requirement is included in the proposed policy so that the Chancellor's office will be updated specifically in regard to occupational programs which do not require the approval of either the institutional governing board or the West Virginia Council for Community and Technical College Education.

The only changes that were made to the proposed policy were editorial or typographical in nature. No changes were made in substance.