

**WEST VIRGINIA  
SECRETARY OF STATE  
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ADMINISTRATIVE LAW DIVISION**

Form #5

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OFFICE WEST VIRGINIA  
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**NOTICE OF AGENCY ADOPTION OF A PROCEDURAL OR INTERPRETIVE RULE  
OR A LEGISLATIVE RULE EXEMPT FROM LEGISLATIVE REVIEW**

AGENCY: Higher Education Policy Commission TITLE NUMBER: 133

CITE AUTHORITY: § 18B-1-1A; 18B-1-4

RULE TYPE: PROCEDURAL  INTERPRETIVE

EXEMPT LEGISLATIVE RULE

CITE STATUTE(S) GRANTING EXEMPTION FROM LEGISLATIVE REVIEW

AMENDMENT TO AN EXISTING RULE: YES  NO

IF YES, SERIES NUMBER OF RULE BEING AMENDED: Series 23

TITLE OF RULE BEING AMENDED: STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES FOR UNDERGRADUATE  
ADMISSIONS  
AT FOUR-YEAR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

IF NO, SERIES NUMBER OF RULE BEING PROPOSED: \_\_\_\_\_

TITLE OF RULE BEING PROPOSED: \_\_\_\_\_

THE ABOVE RULE IS HEREBY ADOPTED AND FILED WITH THE SECRETARY OF STATE. THE  
EFFECTIVE DATE OF THIS RULE IS June 1, 2007



Authorized Signature

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OFFICE WEST VIRGINIA  
SECRETARY OF STATE

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

**SERIES 23  
STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES FOR UNDERGRADUATE ADMISSIONS  
AT FOUR-YEAR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES**

**§133-23-1. GENERAL**

- 1.1 Scope -This rule establishes standards and procedures for undergraduate institutional admissions policies at four-year colleges and universities.
- 1.2 Authority - West Virginia Code § 18B-1-1A; 18B-1-4
- 1.3 Filing Date - May 2, 2007
- 1.4 Effective Date - June 1, 2007
- 1.5 Repeal of Former Rule - Repeals and replaces Title 133, Series 23 which had an effective date of April 1, 2005.

**§133-23-2. STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES**

- 2.1 It is the intent of the Higher Education Policy Commission that West Virginia residents shall have access to higher educational opportunities commensurate with their interests and abilities. Working toward this end, the commission continues to encourage the development of academic programs and flexible time-space options which allow citizens throughout West Virginia to develop to the fullest their capabilities for work and fulfillment of life. It is further the intent of the Commission that admissions policies at the four-year state-supported institutions of higher education should foster the attainment of these broad goals of access to the highest extent possible within the limits of available educational programs and resources.
- 2.2 In recognition of the diverse educational programs offered by the different public four-year higher education institutions and the varying kinds of preparation necessary for successful entry into them, the Commission considers it more appropriate to establish basic statewide guidelines and standards than to provide detailed provisions related to admissions criteria and procedures. Accordingly, the Commission has identified certain basic policies and provisions around which specific institutional admissions policies and practices are to be developed.

### **§133-23-3. BASIC ADMISSIONS STANDARDS**

- 3.1 As a means of ensuring a reasonable chance of success in the educational programs for which students seek admission and of making the most productive use of federal, state and community resources, institutional admissions policies shall incorporate the following basic standards.
- 3.2 This rule applies to undergraduate admissions at West Virginia public four-year colleges and universities. The standards in this rule also apply to students who enroll in baccalaureate-level programs at state higher education institutions where missions are primarily the offering of associate-level degrees. Standards for students enrolled in associate degree or one-year certificate programs, regardless of institutional classification, shall be at least as rigorous as those at the community and technical colleges.
- 3.3 Degree Programs at Four-Year Colleges and Universities. Students who meet General Educational Development (GED) requirements or have a high school diploma and overall grade-point average (GPA) of at least 2.0, or a composite score of at least 17 (3.0 GPA or 18 ACT composite score and a 2.0 GPA effective August 2008) on the ACT may be admitted on a regular admission basis to four-year colleges and universities which offer associate and bachelor's degree programs. For universities which grant doctoral degrees, the minimum high school GPA/standardized test score requirement for regular admission (effective August 2008) is a 3.0 high school GPA or a 19 ACT composite score and a high school 2.0 GPA. Students will normally be expected to sit for the ACT. However, in instances where students have taken the SAT I examination, these scores may be substituted for the ACT. SAT I scores will be converted to ACT equivalents by using an appropriate conversion chart authorized by the chancellor. These students will not be required to take the ACT at a later time.
  - 3.3.1 Conditional admission may be granted in instances where GPA or ACT standards are not met and institutional officials have evidence that the student has the potential to successfully complete college-level work. Students who do not meet the GPA or ACT standards, but who demonstrate the potential to complete an undergraduate program may be admitted conditionally with the following stipulations:

- 3.3.1.1 If freshman placement standards require, developmental work must be completed prior to enrolling in the corresponding college-level courses.
  - 3.3.1.2 Students must complete the provisions of their conditional admission within the first three semesters of enrollment.
  - 3.3.1.3 Conditionally-admitted students must achieve a minimum of a 2.00 GPA in at least twelve graded hours.
  - 3.3.1.4 When all admission standards have been met, conditional status will be removed and the student will become a regular admission student.
- 3.3.2 In order to facilitate an orderly transition to the higher ACT/GPA standards effective in 2008, institutions shall employ the conditional admission provisions in section 3.3.1 of this rule. The use of these provisions must, however, be consistent with the recognition of the Commission's commitment to high academic standards as well as the need to afford students the opportunity to pursue a baccalaureate education. While there are no specific limits imposed on the number of students who may be admitted conditionally in 2008, beginning with the 2010 fall semester, no more than fifteen (15) percent of entering first-time students may be admitted conditionally. The percentage of students admitted conditionally shall not exceed ten (10) percent in fall 2011 and thereafter.
- 3.3.3 In addition to GPA and ACT requirements, students must successfully complete the following minimum academic core unit requirements (effective until August 2008) prior to admission:

**Required Units (Years)**

4 English (including courses in grammar, composition, literature)

3 Social Studies (including U.S. History)

3 Mathematics (Algebra I and at least one higher unit)

3 Science (Two of the three units must be laboratory science. At least two units from Coordinated and Thematic Science 10,

Biology, Chemistry, Physics and other courses with a strong laboratory science orientation)

**Strongly Recommended Units**

2 Foreign Language

**Elective Units**

Remaining Units -- It is recommended that the remaining elective units be chosen from the academic core (English/language arts, mathematics, science, social studies) or subjects such as computer science, fine arts, humanities, and keyboarding.

- 3.3.4 Effective August 2008, students in addition to GPA and ACT requirements, must successfully complete the following minimum academic core unit requirements prior to admission:

**Required Units (Years) 2008 Standards**

4 English (including courses in grammar, composition, and literature)

3 Social Studies (including U.S. History)

4 Mathematics (three units must be Algebra I and higher)

3 Science (all courses to be college preparatory laboratory science, preferably including units from biology, chemistry, and physics)

1 Arts

2 Foreign Language (Two units of the same foreign language)

- 3.3.5 Institutions are authorized to employ the following exemptions to the above unit requirements:

3.3.5.a All four-(4) year public higher education institutions have the discretionary authority to waive the college preparatory curricular requirements for regular admission for not more than five (5) percent of resident freshman students who graduated with a high school diploma within three (3) years of the date

of enrollment based upon enrollment of resident first-time freshmen entering the institution in the fall term of the previous year. Beginning with the fall 2008 semester and until the fall 2010 semester, the five (5) percentage limit on curriculum waivers shall be lifted to allow for a study of the impact of the effect of the 2008 college preparatory curriculum requirements on otherwise academically qualified resident students who seek admission to West Virginia public colleges and universities. This suspension of the waiver limitation will permit (1) West Virginia high schools to deliver more fully the necessary courses required for regular admission and (2) enable a more orderly and non-punitive transition for qualified West Virginia high school students to the state's colleges and universities. No later than December 2009, the Higher Education Policy Commission shall establish an appropriate limit on the percentage of college preparatory curricular waivers allowed, effective with the fall 2010 semester.

Students admitted with a waiver under the provisions of this section must satisfy any of the curricular deficiencies through the successful completion of commensurate college coursework. Each student receiving a waiver under this provision must complete any commensurate coursework no later than the academic term in which s/he accumulates sixty hours of credits.

- 3.3.5.b Applicants for admission who have been out of high school for more than three (3) years or who meet institutionally-established GED requirements may be exempted from the specified high school curricular requirements at the discretion of the individual institution.
- 3.3.5.c Non-resident applicants for admission who graduate from high schools not requiring the minimum number of units for high school graduation listed in Section 3.3.4 (effective August 2008) may be exempted from the resident curricular requirements at the discretion of the individual institution. Any non-resident student

admitted under provisions of this rule who has not completed the high school curricular requirements delineated in section 3.3.4 of this rule must complete any commensurate coursework no later than the academic term in which s/he accumulates sixty hours of credit.

- 3.3.6 The academic performance of students admitted under one (1) of the above exemptions or on a conditional basis must be evaluated at the conclusion of each semester. To continue, such students must be in good academic standing according to institutional standards as stated in the institutional catalog for regularly-admitted students. Neither regular nor conditional admission shall ensure the entry of applicants into specific programs.
- 3.4 Transfer Students. Students seeking transfer admission to a state college must be academically eligible to return to the institution from which they wish to transfer. Students seeking transfer admission or readmission to a community college or community college division must meet the institution's basic admission standards. Students attending community and technical colleges or community college divisions who are seeking to transfer into a four-(4) year program must meet the regular institutional criteria for transfer admission. Students with fewer than twenty-six (26) transferable semester credit hours must meet the basic admission standards outlined in this section.
- 3.4.1 Students under disciplinary sanction at a West Virginia public college or university at the time of the application for transfer admission are also subject to other applicable rules of the Higher Education Policy Commission.
- 3.5 Non-Degree Students. An institution may admit students on a non-degree basis. By definition, such students are not seeking and/or not eligible to pursue a certificate or degree at the institution.
- 3.6 It should be noted that the basic standards contained in this section are based upon current levels of funding. Should financial resources be limited, it may be necessary to establish additional standards and/or accept only those qualified students applying by a specified date.

#### **§133-23-4. INSTITUTIONAL ADMISSIONS PROCEDURES**

- 4.1 High school transcripts are required to be on file for each incoming freshman who is registered in an undergraduate certificate or degree program and who has graduated from high school within five years. Such transcripts shall be on file with the institution prior to the end of the first semester of the student's attendance.
- 4.2 Students who desire to enroll on a degree-seeking basis at four-year state colleges and universities who do not meet the GED requirements or have a high school diploma and an overall grade point average of at least 2.0 must submit ACT or SAT I scores prior to admission.
- 4.3 In accordance with Section 3.3, students who substitute SAT I scores for ACT scores will not be required to take the ACT at a later time.
- 4.4 Degree-seeking state college students at four-year colleges or universities who do meet the GED or high school grade point average requirements must submit ACT or SAT I scores prior to their second semester of enrollment.
- 4.5 All students who have graduated from high school or completed GED requirements more than five years prior to seeking admission to a four-year college or university may have the requirement for ACT or SAT I scores waived at the discretion of the institution.
- 4.6 Transfer students must supply the institution with official transcripts reflecting all previous college work prior to admission.
- 4.7 In addition to the above, colleges may use, but shall not be limited to the use of, the following information in determining admission to institutions and/or institutional programs:
  - 4.7.1 Records of traditional academic performance relative to the specific educational program to which the student seeks entry.
  - 4.7.2 Record of nontraditional learning experiences.
  - 4.7.3 Standardized examinations relative to the requirements of the program to which the student seeks entry.
  - 4.7.4 College equivalency examinations such as the College Level Examination Program (CLEP) and also, special preparatory

programs such as the Advanced Placement Program of the College Entrance Examination Board and the International Baccalaureate Diploma.

4.7.5 Recommendations and reports of interviews.

4.8 Health and immunization records may be required after admission into the institution. Immunization records are to be submitted at the time of initial enrollment in accordance with the applicable rule of the Higher Education Policy Commission.

#### **§133-23-5. INSTITUTIONAL ADMISSIONS POLICIES**

5.1 Institutional admissions policies shall be comprehensive and stated in specific terms and shall include the general admissions requirements of the institution, as well as additional requirements for entry into specific programs.

5.2 All institutional admissions policies shall be submitted to the commission for evaluation in terms of their compatibility with stated commission policies, institutional goals and available educational programs and resources. Any amendments to admission policies shall be submitted to the commission prior to their actual implementation at the institutional level.

5.3 All institutional admissions policies shall be consistent with existing commission policies and applicable State and Federal regulations regarding nondiscrimination.

5.4 Subject to commission approval, institutions may establish admission standards more rigorous than those established by this rule for basic admission to the institution and/or for admission into specific programs.

#### **§133-23-6. IMPLEMENTATION DATE**

6.1. The high school GPA and ACT/SAT I test score requirements in section 3.3 and the successful completion of high school unit requirements listed in section 3.3.4 and related exemptions outlined in Section 3 shall be effective no later than the fall of 2008. The effective date of all other provisions of this policy will be sixty (60) days after the date of filing with the West Virginia Secretary of State's Office.

**West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission  
Meeting of April 26, 2007**

**ITEM:** Approval of Series 23, *Standards and Procedures for Undergraduate Admissions* (Revised)

**INSTITUTIONS:** All

**COMMITTEE:** Academic Policy Committee

**RECOMMENDED RESOLUTION:** *Resolved*, That the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission approves Series 23, *Standards and Procedures for Undergraduate Admissions* as revised.

**STAFF MEMBER:** Bruce Flack

**BACKGROUND:**

The West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission at its February 2, 2007 meeting approved revisions to Series 23, *Standards and Procedures for Undergraduate Admissions* for dissemination for the thirty-day comment period. The only comment received was the unanimous recommendation of the Academic Affairs Advisory Committee (chief academic officers) to strike the final sentence in Section 3.3 that would require students to submit ACT and SAT I writing scores for purposes of securing undergraduate admission. The rationale for the change, which is included in the proposed rule revision, is that satisfactory completion of the writing segment is an appropriate consideration for freshman placement in English courses (Series 21, *Freshman Placement and Placement Standards*), but not for a policy on baccalaureate admission.

All other revisions proposed for Series 23 at the February 2 Higher Education Policy Commission meeting remain unchanged. Series 23, *Standards and Procedures for Undergraduate Admissions*, as revised, makes several modifications to the undergraduate admission standards. An explanation of changes in the revised rule and the rationale for the proposed changes follows:

The West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission rule on baccalaureate admission standards, Series 23, *Standards and Procedures for Undergraduate Admission*, establishes more rigorous minimum standards for baccalaureate admission beginning with the fall 2008 semester. The most significant of the 2008 modifications are (1) an increased standard for high school GPA and ACT or SAT I standardized test scores and (2) imposition of more rigorous college preparatory curricular requirements. Those changes, as currently delineated in Series 23, will significantly limit the number of entering college students, many of whom have the academic qualifications likely to ensure success in college. To address these issues and at the same time maintain the integrity of the 2008

standards, several modifications in the rule are proposed. The major change proposed is the addition of a new category for regular admission to the state's colleges and universities. This category would provide that student applicants who have a cumulative 3.0 high school GPA, regardless of composite ACT or SAT I scores, are eligible for regular admission. The other proposed rule changes are designed to phase in the new standards and to prevent unintended consequences of denying admission to academically qualified students.

The significant modifications are:

**Section 3.2. Two-year programs at four-year institutions.** This section deletes reference to Potomac State College, now a division of West Virginia University. It adds a statement that standards for admission into certificate and associate programs must be as rigorous as those at community and technical colleges.

**Section 3.3. New option for minimum standards for regular admission.** The current minimum standard for regular baccalaureate admission, effective fall 2008, is a 2.0 high school GPA and 18 ACT composite score at the four-year institutions and a 2.0 high school GPA and 19 ACT composite score at Marshall University and West Virginia University. A proposed new option is to add a provision that students who have a cumulative 3.0 high school GPA are eligible for regular admission, regardless of composite ACT or SAT I scores.

*Rationale:* Since student academic performance in high school as represented in the high school GPA is widely recognized as a primary indicator of how a student will perform in college, it is common practice in American higher education to give extra weight to high GPAs in the admission decision. Enrollment data show that students with a high school GPA of at least 3.0 have a reasonably good chance of success in college. This additional option would give a state college or university greater flexibility in the baccalaureate admission process.

**Section 3.3. Scores on the ACT and SAT I writing segments to be used for undergraduate placement.** Satisfactory performance on the ACT and SAT I writing segments is essential for placement in the first credit course in English (HEPC Series 21, *Freshman Assessment and Placement Standards*), but would not be a consideration for admission to an institution. The proposed change is to strike the reference to ACT and SAT I writing segments for purpose of baccalaureate admission.

*Rationale:* The ACT writing segment, regarded as an optional segment by the ACT organization, is not factored into the ACT composite score. Since ACT and SAT I composite scores have always been the basis for the baccalaureate admission decision rather than segments of the ACT or SAT I exams, it is more appropriate to limit utilization of scores on the writing segments to actions on undergraduate placement in English. The HEPC rule on undergraduate placement, Series 21, will need to be revised to include the ACT and SAT I writing segments in determining freshman placement.

**Section 3.3.2. Limits on conditional admission.** Currently, there are no limits in Series 23 on the use of conditional admissions. The proposal is to limit the use of conditional admissions to no more than fifteen percent of entering students effective with the fall 2010 semester. Beginning in 2011 and thereafter the limit on conditional admission would lower to ten percent.

*Rationale:* Admissions offices are aware that the granting of conditional admission is sometimes warranted. Awarding of conditional admission should result only from case by case review and should not be done indiscriminately. It is appropriate to place a limit on the use of conditional admission, particularly through phased application of the proposed new standard.

**Section 3.3.4. Science units.** The requirements on completion of regular high school science units have been changed to provide that laboratory science courses must be college preparatory, preferably in biology, chemistry and physics. This modification would be supportive of impending changes in West Virginia high school science requirements in the Professional Pathways, which by 2012 will emphasize completion of units in biology and chemistry.

**Sections 3.3.5. a. and c. Waivers of curricular requirements.** Beginning with the fall 2008 semester and until the fall 2010 semester, the five percent limit on curriculum waivers for resident students shall be lifted to allow for a study of the impact of the effect of the 2008 college preparatory curriculum requirements on otherwise academically qualified resident students who seek admission to West Virginia public colleges and universities. No later than December 2009, the Higher Education Policy Commission shall establish an appropriate limit on the percentage of college preparatory curricular waivers allowed, effective with the fall 2010 semester.

*Rationale:* The suspension of the waiver limitation will permit (1) West Virginia high schools to deliver more fully the necessary courses required for regular admission and (2) enable a more orderly and non-punitive transition for qualified West Virginia high school students to the state's colleges and universities.

To compensate for curricular deficiencies, the revised policy would require both resident and non-resident students who are granted waivers to complete commensurate college coursework in the deficiency area(s) no later than the academic term in which sixty hours are accumulated.

**Section 3.4. Transfer students.** This section of the revised policy provides that students who transfer to a baccalaureate institution and have completed less than twenty-six (26) transferable semester credit hours must meet the basic admission standards outlined in Series 23.