

2.03.00.00 Admission at the Community Colleges



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Policy/Guideline Area

Academic Policies

Applicable Divisions

Community Colleges

Purpose

This policy establishes admissions standards for community colleges governed by the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR).

Definitions

- Adequate coverage - adequate coverage shall mean that the student's coverage meets or exceeds the level of coverage provided to participants in the TBR's Student/Scholar Health & Accident Insurance Plan.
- Ability to Benefit (ATB)- The Department of Education established criteria, through a provision of the Higher Education Act, that must be met by a person who does not have either a regular high school diploma or general high school equivalency credential to receive federal financial aid.

Policy/Guideline

I. Provisions for Community Colleges

A. Policy Development

1. The Tennessee Board of Regents requires that all community colleges shall develop an admission policy consistent with the provisions of this policy and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Non-discrimination on the Basis of Handicap) and the Americans with

Disabilities Act of 1990 and submit it to the Tennessee Board of Regents for approval.

2. Each institution shall include its approved admission policy in its catalog or other appropriate publications.
3. Dual Enrollment admissions policies shall be developed in compliance with TBR Policy Early Postsecondary Opportunities 2.01.00.05 and T.C.A. § 49-6-3111.

B. Policy Revision

1. Any subsequent change to an approved admission policy shall, prior to implementation, be submitted to the Tennessee Board of Regents for review and approval.

C. Medical or Health Information

1. Each institution shall comply with Rules promulgated by the Board of Regents regarding requirements for immunization against certain diseases prior to attendance at a system institution. Institutions shall offer reasonable accommodations and exemptions for medical conditions and religious beliefs in accordance with state and federal law.
2. A copy of Board of Regents promulgated rules is Exhibit 1 to this policy.

Procedures

I. General Provisions

A. Admission of Non-Tennessee Residents

1. Each community college may establish minimum criteria for the admission of residents of states other than Tennessee, which exceed the minimum criteria established for residents of the State.

B. Residency Classification

1. Each community college shall, in the admission or readmission process, assign each student a residency classification using TBR

Policy No. 3.05.01.00 Regulations for Classifying Students In-State and Out-of-State for the Purposes of Paying College.

C. Admission of International Non-Immigrant Applicants

1. Each community college must establish policies and procedures for the admission of international non-immigrant applicants in accordance with the following criteria:
 - a. Educational Level. The educational level attained must be comparable to that required of U.S. applicants.
 - b. Proof of English Language Proficiency for Non-Native English Language Speakers. In order to determine an applicant's level of proficiency in the English language, each community college shall require that applicants whose native language is not English submit scores earned on one of the TBR recognized standardized examinations or through a standardized examination developed at the individual institution. (See Exhibit 2 for a list of recognized examinations). Courses completed at another U.S. institution may be used in lieu of standardized examination scores.
 - c. Financial Statement. In order to determine the international student's ability to pay registration fees, non-resident fees, living and other expenses, each institution shall require international applicants to supply evidence of financial capability.
 - d. Immigration Service Regulations. Institutions must adhere to all U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service regulations in the admission, enrollment, and readmission of international non-immigrant applicants.
 - e. Certification of Freedom from Tuberculosis. All international non-immigrant students applying for admission pursuant to a

student visa shall submit within thirty (30) days from the first day of classes a certificate from a licensed physician or other qualified medical authority verifying freedom from tuberculosis. Failure to submit such certification shall result in denial of admission or continued enrollment. In the event that a student has tuberculosis or has potential tuberculosis requiring medical treatment, continued enrollment will be conditioned upon the determination by a licensed physician that further enrollment is not a risk to others and upon the student's compliance with any prescribed medical treatment program.

- f. Medical and Hospitalization Insurance. Each institution must require that international non-immigrant applicants with J, F, or M visas have and maintain medical and hospitalization insurance as a condition of admission and continued enrollment at the institution. Applicants with J visas must also carry adequate medical and hospitalization insurance for spouses and dependents. Institutions may require similar insurance coverage of all other international non-immigrant applicants.
2. Institutions shall establish this requirement in policy and shall establish a process for:
 - a. Informing applicants for admission of the coverage required and of its approximate cost of coverage and options for accessing insurance;
 - b. Informing applicants of the documents that will be acceptable as proof of medical and hospitalization coverage; and
 - c. Automatically enrolling in the TBR recommended insurance plan those international non-immigrant students who do not otherwise have adequate coverage. Enrollment shall take place

not later than at the time of class registration, and the cost of the coverage shall be added to the student's registration fees.

D. Admission to Specialized or Limited-Enrollment Programs

1. Each community college shall develop specific policy and procedures for admission of students to programs or courses with enrollment limitations and/or specialized curricula.
2. Such limitations should be based upon selective criteria appropriate to the program or course which apply equally to all prospective students, provided that preference for admission be given to residents of the State of Tennessee. (Incorporates former TBR Policy No. 2.03.00.05 - see TBR Meeting September 30, 1983)
3. A number of factors such as accreditation and professional certification standards, limited clinical and classroom space, faculty availability, and a concern for appropriate student progress influence the selective admissions process to certain undergraduate programs.
 - a. Students must meet the application criteria, be reviewed and accepted for admission, and make satisfactory progress to be admitted and continue in these academic programs.
 - b. Institutions may vary in their admission requirements based on their analysis of student success characteristics.
 - c. Admission and progression policies related to selective programs should reflect the likelihood of being admitted to the academic program at the earliest possible point and contain information on grade point average, standardized test scores, and grade expectations in specified high school courses indicative of success in the field.

4. Admission and progression policies should be clearly displayed in all materials to prospective applicants.

E. Admission under Ability to Benefit (ATB)

1. For institutions wishing to participate in the ATB option under Title IV, students must meet the minimum criteria as outlined by the U.S. Department of Education.
2. ATB allows students to apply for Federal Financial Aid by proving their “ability to benefit” from college, either by taking a test or completing six college credits before placement on ATB.
3. Institutions which have established ATB processes and procedures must maintain documentation that the programs in which students enroll are Title IV eligible and must offer students on ATB the opportunity to also earn a high school credential.

F. Admission to Medical, Nursing, and Allied Health Programs

1. Each community college that offers medical, nursing, or allied health programs shall require that all persons admitted to such programs:
 - a. Provide evidence through a health verification form, that at a minimum, establish the applicant’s compliance with the Rules promulgated by the Tennessee Department of Health regarding requirements for immunization against certain diseases, including the Hepatitis B vaccine, and other communicable diseases. Institutions shall offer reasonable accommodations and exemptions for medical conditions and religious beliefs in accordance with state and federal law.
 - b. Be, with reasonable accommodation, physically and mentally capable of performing the essential functions of the program as defined in writing by the institution.

G. Readmission

1. Each community college shall develop policies and procedures for the readmission of students.
2. Readmission policies and procedures for students not in good academic standing shall be consistent with TBR Policy No. 2.03.01.01 (Undergraduate Academic Retention Standards).

H. Application Fee

1. TBR institutions are prohibited from charging an application fee.

II. Community College Degree Admission

A. Admission of First-Time Freshmen

1. Applicants for degree admission as first-time freshmen must be admitted using the following criteria:
 - a. High School Graduation. Applicants for degree admission as first-time freshmen must provide an official transcript showing graduation from high school unless otherwise exempted.
 - b. High School Diploma or general high school equivalency credential
 - c. Standardized Examination Scores
 - (1) Community colleges will not use standardized scores for admission purposes, but may use them for advisement purposes as well as a component in the placement decision in accordance with TBR Learning Support Policy No. 2.03.00.02.
 - d. High School Course Requirements
 - (1) Admission will be granted to freshmen applicants who hold a recognized high school diploma that includes a distribution of college preparatory courses, such as those

required in the core elements of the Tennessee High School Diploma.

- (2) Applicants who graduated prior to the adoption of the Tennessee Diploma Project curriculum by the TBR who hold a high school diploma are exempt from the diploma requirements with the exception of those in T.C.A. § 49-7-110.
- (3) Admission will be granted for students who submit a high school diploma from a church-related school or home school as defined by T.C.A. § 49-50-801 and T.C.A. § 49-6-3050.
 - (a) Church-Related or Home School students who do not present valid ACT, SAT, or other approved assessment scores at time of admissions may be subject to program assessments to determine program eligibility consistent with TBR Learning Support Policy No. 2.03.00.02.

e. Out-of-State Applicants

- (1) Applicants who are residents of states other than Tennessee are subject to the same admission requirements as in-state applicants.

B. Admission of Transfer Students

- 1. Each community college shall establish policy and procedures for the admission of transfer students that are consistent with the TBR Policy 2.01.00.00 General Education & Degree Requirements, Sections II and III, TBR Learning Support Policy No. 2.03.00.02. and with the following criteria:

- a. The applicant must provide official transcripts of credits attempted from all institutions of higher education previously attended.
- b. If the student has earned an associate degree or higher from a postsecondary institution accredited by an agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, Community Colleges shall not require an applicant to provide the institution with a copy of the applicant's high school transcript, or general high school equivalency credential as a part of the institution's admission process.
- c. The applicant's grade point average on transferable courses must be at least equal to that which the institution requires for the readmission of its own students. Applicants who do not meet the institution's standards may be admitted on scholastic probation or other appropriate condition.
- d. Institutions must develop policy and publish criteria regarding the awarding of transfer consistent with TBR Policy 2.01.00.04 Awarding of Credits Earned Through Extra-Institutional Learning to Community Colleges and Universities and TBR Policy 2.03.01.01 Undergraduate Academic Retention Standards.
 - (1) Institutions may determine a subset if grade point average is used to determine admission to selective programs.

C. Non-Degree Admission for Community College Applicants

- 1. Each community college shall develop policy and procedures for admitting applicants who wish to take credit courses, but who either do not qualify for or do not wish to apply for degree admission.

2. Policies shall include any conditions of enrollment and any term or overall credit-hour limitations.

D. Audit and No-Credit Admission

1. Each community college shall develop policy and procedures for the admission of persons wishing only to audit courses or to take credit courses on a no-credit basis. The following provisions shall apply:
 - a. Admission may be limited or denied based on the availability of space in the individual classroom.

Exhibits

For Exhibits, click the Attachments button at the top right of the page.



Sources

Authority

T.C.A. § 49-8-102, T.C.A. § 49-8-203, T.C.A. § 49-7-124, T.C.A. § 49-6-3050, T.C.A. § 49-50-801, T.C.A. § 49-6- 3111, T.C.A. § 49-7-110

[Educational Choices in Tennessee](#)

Graduation Requirements: [Education/Instruction/Graduation Requirements](#)

[Ability to Benefit Gen-15-09 Dear Colleague](#)

[Ability to Benefit Gen-12-09 Dear Colleague](#)

[Ability to Benefit \(ATB\) Tests 06/24/2015](#)

 [Tennessee State Board of Education High School Policy 2.103 Revised 4.20.18](#)

History

TBR Meeting, August 16, 1974; September 29, 1978; June 27, 1980, September 30, 1983; December 16, 1983; June 27, 1986; September 16, 1988; December 2, 1988; June 30, 1989; December 7, 1990; March 20, 1992; March 19, 1993; September 17, 1993; June 23, 1994; December 8, 1994; December 15, 1995; March 7, 1997; June 19, 1998; September 22, 2000; April 2, 2004; December 8, 2006; June 28, 2007; June 24, 2010; Revised December 11, 2014;

The admission policy was revised in its entirety on September 30, 1983, superseding the previous policy and all amendments thereto. Revised Jan. 1, 2014 per Tennessee

Alternative Diploma Act to reflect change from General Educational Development (GED) Certificate to Tennessee High School Equivalency (HSE) Diploma.

Revised at Board Meeting March 30, 2016, Revised at Board Meeting March 21, 2019, Revised at Board Meeting March 25, 2021; Ministerial Changes April 13, 2023; Ministerial Changes August 17, 2023; Ministerial Changes August 23, 2024; Updated Exhibit 2 October 29, 2024.

Related Policies

[2.03.01.01 Undergraduate Academic Retention & GPA Standards](#)

[3.05.01.00 Policy for Classifying Students In-State & Out-of-State for Paying College Fees & Tuition & for Admission Purposes](#)

[2.03.00.02 Community College Learning Support](#)