

**ADOPTED JOINT RULES WITH ILLINOIS COMMUNITY COLLEGE BOARD:
REVERSE TRANSFER OF CREDIT**

Submitted for: Action.

Summary: This item seeks adoption of joint rules with the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) regarding the reverse transfer of credit, pursuant to the Student Transfer Achievement Reform (STAR) Act. (110 ILCS 150) Reverse transfer means that a former community college student who completed at least 15 hours of coursework at the community college and is now attending a public university may apply for an associate degree using requisite courses earned at the university.

This is the first time that the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) and ICCB have collaborated on joint rules. The process specified in the Illinois Administrative Procedures Act requires both Boards to simultaneously go through the process for joint rules. (5 ILCS 100)

The proposed joint rules were approved by IBHE at the June 4, 2019 board meeting and subsequently, ICCB did not object to the rules at their June 7, 2019 meeting. The proposed rules were published on June 21, 2019 in the *Illinois Register*, which initiated the 45-day public notice period. Public comments were received and reviewed by the staff of IBHE and ICCB. No changes to the proposed rules are recommended. The rulemaking is now ready for IBHE adoption, subject to approval by ICCB and no objection by the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules.

Action Requested: That the Illinois Board of Higher Education approve the joint rules for the reverse transfer of credit (23 Ill. Adm. Code 1065 and 23 Ill. Adm. Code 1502) as contained in this item.

STATE OF ILLINOIS
BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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Illinois has a robust transfer infrastructure that has resulted in our state being first in the nation in degree completion rates for community college students (See Illinois Proud: Completing College at <https://www.ibhe.org/DataPoints/Illinois-Proud-2019-Completing-College.html>). Reverse transfer of credit provides another avenue for Illinoisans to complete a degree. Reverse transfer means that a former community college student who completed at least 15 hours of coursework at the community college and is now attending a public university may apply for an associate degree using requisite courses earned at the university. Through reverse transfer, these individuals have the potential to “transfer back” university courses that count toward an associate degree and earn that associate degree even while they are in progress to completing the baccalaureate degree.

An amendment to the Student Transfer Achievement Reform (STAR) Act was passed in 2018, requiring the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) and the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) to adopt rules to provide procedures for reverse transfer in Illinois. (110 ILCS 150) Staff of the IBHE and ICCB have been working together to develop rules for joint adoption. Stakeholders across community colleges and public universities have been engaged in the development of these rules and will continue to be involved through the remaining steps in the process leading to implementation.

Stakeholders across community colleges and public universities have been engaged in the development of these rules, as well as review of the same through the formal public comment process. Groups involved included the following: IBHE, ICCB, Illinois public university provosts, Illinois community college chief academic officers, Illinois transfer coordinators, the Illinois Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, the IBHE Faculty Advisory Council, the IBHE Proprietary Advisory Council, and provosts of Illinois private institutions.

The proposed joint rules were approved by IBHE at the June 4, 2019 board meeting and subsequently, ICCB did not object to the same at their June 7, 2019 meeting. The proposed rules were published on June 21, 2019 in the *Illinois Register*, which initiated the 45-day public notice period. Public comments were received and reviewed by the staff of IBHE and ICCB. No changes to the proposed rules are recommended. The rulemaking is now ready for IBHE adoption, subject to approval by ICCB and no objection by the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules.

Subsequent to IBHE’s adoption of the rules, the ICCB will consider the joint rules for approval during their September 20, 2019 board meeting. If there are no objections and no changes, the adopted joint rules will be submitted for review by the staff and members of the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules (JCAR). If JCAR has no objection, the adopted rules will be filed with the Secretary of State and become effective immediately. However, if there are objections or changes proposed by ICCB and/or JCAR, except for technical corrections, the rules will be brought before the Board at the December 10, 2019 meeting for re-consideration.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends the adoption of the following resolution:

The Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) hereby adopts the joint rules for reverse transfer of credit (23 Ill. Adm. Code 1065 and 23 Ill. Adm. Code 1502) as detailed in the attached document, pending approval by the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) and no objection by the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules (JCAR). If ICCB and/or JCAR have an objection or proposed substantive changes to the rules adopted by IBHE, the IBHE shall re-consider this resolution.

ATTACHMENT 1: IBHE PROPOSED JOINT RULE

**TITLE 23: EDUCATION AND CULTURAL RESOURCES
SUBTITLE A: EDUCATION
CHAPTER II: BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

PART 1065

**JOINT RULES OF THE BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND ILLINOIS COMMUNITY
COLLEGE BOARD: RULES ON REVERSE TRANSFER OF CREDIT**

AUTHORITY: Implementing Sections 23(a), (b) and (c) and authorized by Section 23(e) of the Student Transfer Achievement Reform Act [110 ILCS 150].

SOURCE: Adopted at 43 Ill. Reg.____, effective _____.

(Editor's Note: The text of this Joint Rule appears at 23 Ill. Adm. Code 1502.)

ATTACHMENT 2: ICCB PROPOSED JOINT RULE

TITLE 23: EDUCATION AND CULTURAL RESOURCES
SUBTITLE A: EDUCATION
CHAPTER VII: ILLINOIS COMMUNITY COLLEGE BOARD

PART 1502

JOINT RULES OF THE BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND ILLINOIS COMMUNITY COLLEGE BOARD: RULES ON REVERSE TRANSFER OF CREDIT

Section	
1502.10	Purpose
1502.20	Definitions
1502.30	Student Eligibility
1502.40	Student Request
1502.50	Institutional Responsibilities
1502.60	Community College Determination to Award Degree
1502.70	Voluntary Participation by Others

AUTHORITY: Implementing Sections 23(a), (b) and (c) and authorized by Section 23(e) of the Student Transfer Achievement Reform Act [110 ILCS 150].

SOURCE: Adopted at 43 Ill. Reg.____, effective _____.

Section 1502.10 Purpose

The purpose of this joint rule is to *foster the reverse transfer of credit for any student who has accumulated at least 15 hours of academic credit at a community college and a sufficient number of hours of academic credit at a State university in the prescribed courses necessary to meet a community college’s requirements to be awarded an associate degree.* (Section 23 of Act).

Section 1502.20 Definitions

“Act” means the Student Transfer Achievement Reform Act [110 ILCS 150].

“Admissions Office” means an office within a community college or State university responsible for recruiting and communicating with new and transfer students.

“*Community College*” means a public community college in this State. (Section 5 of Act).

“Eligible Student” means a student who meets the criteria in Section 1502.30.

“Registrar’s Office” means an office within a community college or State university responsible for registering students, keeping academic records, and corresponding with applicants and evaluating their credentials.

“*Reverse Transfer of Credit*” means the transfer of earned academic credit from a State university to a community college for the purpose of obtaining an associate degree at the community college. (Section 23 of Act).

“Reverse Transfer Data Sharing Platform” means a national electronic data sharing and exchange platform that meets nationally accepted standards, conventions, and practices, such as the National Student Clearinghouse or similar platform.

“Reverse Transfer Agreement” means an institutional agreement between one or more community colleges and a State university to share student transcripts when a student requests a reverse transfer of credit.

“Opt-in” means the student’s decision to seek a reverse transfer of credit.

“State University” means a public university in this State. (Section 5 of Act).

Section 1502.30 Student Eligibility

The reverse transfer of credit option is available to a student who is currently enrolled in a State university and has:

- a) Transferred to the State university from or previously attended a community college;
- b) Earned at least 15 credit hours of transferrable course work completed at a community college;
- c) Earned a cumulative total of at least 60 credit hours for transferrable course work successfully completed at student’s current or previously attended postsecondary institutions; and
- d) Submitted a request to the State university at which the student is currently enrolled.

Section 1502.40 Student Request

A student who meets the eligibility criteria in Section 1502.30 may request a reverse transfer of credit from the State university to the community college previously attended.

- a) The opportunity to opt-in may be made at enrollment or at any time thereafter while enrolled at the State university. The student shall provide the information required in of Section 1502.30 (a), (b) and (c) and authorize the release of his or her transcript information, pursuant to State university procedures.
- b) In the event that the student has earned credit hours at more than one community college or State university, the student shall:
 - 1) Identify the community colleges and State universities at which any credit hours have been earned; and
 - 2) Authorize release of his or her transcript information from the community colleges and State universities to the community college identified for the purpose of earning an associate degree through a reverse transfer of credit.

Section 1502.50 Institutional Responsibilities

- a) Each State university and community college shall make available an opt-in process for the reverse transfer of credit, pursuant to this Part.

- b) Each State university shall notify students who meet the eligibility criteria in Section 1502.30 each academic year. The notification shall include information about the State university's process to reverse transfer of credit.
- c) State universities and community colleges shall comply with the following process:
 - 1) Information about reverse transfer of credit shall, at a minimum, be clearly identified on the institution's Internet website and printed in course catalogs. This information shall also be made available through the admissions office and the registrar's office.
 - 2) After verifying student eligibility, the student information may be transferred through a reverse transfer data sharing platform or a reverse transfer agreement, or by contacting the institution directly.

Institutions are encouraged to use a Reverse Transfer Data Sharing Platform as a cost-effective method to exchange course level data. Any student information obtained from the platform must be accepted as official documentation of the student record.
 - 3) Transcript fees assessed to prepare and send student transcripts to community colleges may be waived to help promote the reverse transfer of credit. Community colleges may waive fees assessed to conduct degree audits and to process graduation applications as part of the reverse transfer of credits.
 - 4) After receiving the student information, the community college shall review the information, and if the community college determines the student has earned the credits required to receive an associate degree, may award the associate degree
 - 5) *No later than 30 business days after receiving an application for reverse transfer of credit and all required transcripts, a community college shall notify an applicant if he or she qualifies for an associate degree based on the total earned credits.* (Section 23 of Act). The community college shall send the same notification to the State university.
 - 6) In the event that the community college awards an associate degree pursuant to this Part, the community college shall send a student transcript to the State university. The transcript will include the award of an associate degree.

Section 1502.60 Community College Determination to Award Degree

In awarding an associate degree, the community college shall evaluate the applicant's course work completed, along with the transfer credit earned, and shall determine whether the associate degree requirements have been met. (Section 23 of Act). Nothing in this Part affects the ability of the community college to determine the course work required to earn an associate degree awarded by that institution.

Section 1502.70 Voluntary Participation by Others

This Part does not preclude private colleges and universities from voluntarily participating in the reverse transfer of credit.