

## HIGHER EDUCATION REPORTING POLICIES FOR ARKANSAS TECHNICAL COLLEGES

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The Arkansas Higher Education Information System (AHEIS) is the statewide system for reporting institutional higher education data. The AHEIS system is managed by the Department of Higher Education, and operates with the cooperation of the public and independent colleges and universities of Arkansas. This reporting system uses uniform definitions and reporting forms to ensure accuracy and comparability of data across institutions as well as year-to-year continuity.

Since the State Board of Higher Education is now the governing board for 14 technical colleges established by Act 1244 of 1991 and related legislation, AHEIS reporting policies must also be extended to all financial and student reports by the new technical colleges. During the summer, the ADHE Planning and Research Division conducted enrollment audits at each technical college. While the audits were taking place, the Department's data processing staff acquired financial accounting software for the technical colleges and developed a computerized registration and reporting system.

The data elements in this new computerized registration system are based on AHEIS definitions used by all other Arkansas institutions of higher education. The new system also incorporates, for the technical colleges, the new statewide Student Information System developed in 1990 by ADHE and the public colleges and universities. Individual student records will be generated for each enrolled student at every technical college with the information needed to complete all ADHE reports, calculate retention and graduation rates, and conduct other studies as needed.

This agenda item describes the most important definitions used in student reporting by the AHEIS system. Definitions of credit and noncredit courses are the basis for all headcount and credit hour reporting. Only those students and credit hours meeting these definitions will be reported by the technical colleges and used by ADHE in summary reports and budget formula calculations.

Additionally, the reporting system put in place at the technical colleges follows the standard practice in Arkansas of freezing headcount enrollment and credit hour production on the eleventh class day of each term. As is the case with all other public colleges and universities in the state, changes in headcount or credit hour production after the eleventh class day are not to be reported to ADHE and will not be used in any reports or statistics kept by the department.

## **CREDIT VS. NONCREDIT COURSEWORK**

### Credit Courses

Credit courses are courses for which, upon successful completion, students are given credit that can be applied to meet the requirements for a degree, certification, or similar academic award at the granting institution. In addition, courses that can be transferred to meet requirements for a degree or certificate at another Arkansas institution and developmental courses for which credit equivalency is granted may also apply. Developmental courses may not be counted toward graduation requirements.

A credit hour meets the minimum class time of 50 minutes per week for 16 weeks or an equivalent time. Labs and shops are scheduled a minimum of two 50-minute periods per week for 16 weeks to equal one (1) credit. A ratio of more than 2:1 may be used if required to provide adequate lab/shop time.

A credit course must have as a minimum the following requirements: a published course description, a course syllabus including testing and grading procedures, and the awarding of a final grade.

### Noncredit Courses

Courses, seminars, workshops, and other institutional activities or experiences offered by a higher education institution that may not be applied to meet requirements of the institution's degree/diploma certificate program. Noncredit activities may include continuing education or community service activities. These courses do not generate student semester credit hours and should not be reported to ADHE on any report of credit hour production.

### High School Enrollment

High school enrollment refers to students who are enrolled simultaneously in a high school and an institution of higher education but have not yet graduated from high school. Fundable credit for high school student enrollment consists of:

1. Those credits for which high school students are enrolled as a part of a recognized college/high school cooperative vocational program.
2. Those on-campus credits for which high school students pay their own fees and enroll for higher education vocational or non-vocational credit in addition to their normal high school program. High school students whose fees are paid by the public school district, subdivision thereof, or any entity directly related thereto will not meet the requirements of this definition unless those students qualify under Act 57 of the first 1983 Extraordinary Session of the 74th Arkansas General Assembly.

## **STUDENT LEVELS**

Student level refers to the proportion of total requirements a student obtained, as of the census date, toward the completion of the degree/diploma or certificate program in which the student is enrolled. The following mutually exclusive undergraduate student level categories will be used:

1. LOWER DIVISION - A student who (a) is enrolled in a program(s), courses(s) of study, or activity(ies) which leads to an associate degree and has earned less than 60 hours; or (b) is enrolled in an undergraduate occupational or vocational program(s) of three or fewer years' duration which results in formal recognition below the baccalaureate degree. The following subdivisions should also be used:
  - a. FIRST-TIME ENTERING FRESHMAN - A lower division student who (a) has earned zero semester credit hours or (b) students who earned college credit while still enrolled in high school. Students should be reported in this subdivision during one reporting period only.
  - b. CONTINUING FRESHMAN - A lower division student who has earned fewer than 30 semester credit hours.
  - c. SOPHOMORE - A lower division student who has earned at least 30 but less than 60 semester hours.
2. UNCLASSIFIED PRE-BACCALAUREATE - A student who cannot be classified into one of the categories above because he or she is not enrolled in a program of study leading to a degree/diploma or certificate, even though taking courses with regular students. This category does not include students who have been admitted to pursue a degree but have not yet declared a major.

## **CENSUS DATES FOR REPORTING PURPOSES**

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The census date for reporting student enrollment, including student semester credit hours, is the end of the eleventh day of classes in a regular term and the end of the fifth day during each summer term. Any changes in enrollment or credit hour status after the census date should not be included in data reported to the Department of Higher Education.

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