Federal Compliance Program
Ball State University

Ball State University is fully committed to complying with the requirements of the Higher Learning Commission and federal law. This section provides information documenting compliance with the requirements of the Federal Compliance Program.

Credits, Program Length, and Tuition

Credits and Program Length

Ball State operates on a traditional semester system and offers academic credit in terms of semester credit hours. Ball State’s requirements relating instructional minutes to credit hours are presented in the ECA manual. Each semester hour of credit requires 50 instructional minutes weekly for a 15-week semester, with an expectation of 2 additional hours of out-of-class work by students. Thus, in traditional classroom settings, Ball State awards an hour of credit for each 2,250 minutes of expected student work. Departments and units follow this rule in establishing the number of credit hours awarded in nontraditional settings. This standard is consistent with the credit hour definition found in Department of Education regulation 34 CFR §600.2.

Ball State proposed additions to its Faculty and Professional Personnel Handbook that would publicly disseminate its policy that a student hour reflects 2,250 minutes of expected student work. The additions also will require explicit evaluation of credit hour assignment when courses are proposed and revised, and periodic evaluation of credit hour assignment for continuing courses. These additions were introduced into the governance system and approved during the 2012–13 academic year.

In 2011, Ball State sought to maximize the number of undergraduate degrees that can be completed in eight 15-credit-hour semesters. Previously, curricula required a minimum of 126 credits, requiring overloaded semesters or an extra half semester of summer instruction. The university has reduced the minimum number of undergraduate credits to 120. The intent of this initiative was to enable most students to graduate in four years or fewer. However, the degree requirements of some individual programs may demand more than 120 credit hours, such as the bachelor of landscape architecture (BLA), which is a five-year degree requiring a total of 149–154 hours. Minimum credit hour requirements for graduate degrees, along with program-specific requirements, are described in Ball State’s Graduate Catalog.

Tuition

Ball State’s tuition and mandatory fees are set by the Board of Trustees. On June 16, 2011, the board approved the administration’s proposal to revise its tuition schedule after a task force spent two years studying the university’s tuition structure and developed recommendations for a simplified and more transparent fee structure.

Presentations on the tuition restructuring plan were given to the public and the Board of Trustees. A “dedicated” fee that was included in tuition was removed from tuition and instead itemized as a defined expense called student services fee. This fee supports extracurricular
opportunities, such as the L.A. Pittenger Student Center and its programming, and student activities, including Late Nite and Emens Auditorium. New program and course fees were adopted to reflect cost differences in certain programs. Before this revision, students in all programs faced a uniform tuition schedule. The revision increases the fees for certain programs the university has identified as high-cost programs (i.e., architecture, business, music, nursing, and laboratory courses). As an example, students are charged a $10 per credit hour fee for courses in business, where salaries are high because the demand for qualified faculty exceeds supply.

Overall, the tuition restructuring plan was not part of tuition setting or a budget reduction exercise and is expected to be revenue neutral. All rates are public and available to students in printed form and online.

**Student Complaints**

Historically, Ball State has relied upon a decentralized and informal model for serving students with complaints. This approach is appropriate because most complaints are effectively resolved in an informal manner by the individuals working in the department or area closest to the situation. These individuals possess the greatest amount of experience with the policies and procedures that apply in the case at hand, are most familiar with the particulars of the student’s circumstances, and can draw from experiences of similar situations to propose options and solutions. Senior officers at the university will expect that a prompt and fair effort has been made to achieve satisfactory resolution at the appropriate level before they will offer to continue the investigation of a student complaint to reach resolution at their level.

Also supporting this approach is the university’s Roll Out the Red customer service training program. It is provided to professional, support, and student staff to handle customer service situations within their own area when possible and to route complaints to the appropriate administrative level in a timely fashion.

**Division of Student Affairs**

For almost 20 years, Ball State’s Division of Student Affairs has offered students the services of an ombudsperson. The ombudsperson offered students a neutral, confidential, and informal approach to conflict resolution. The practice of the ombudsperson also reinforced the informal approach to conflict resolution described above. Ongoing assessment of the ombudsperson’s office process indicated that time students spent with the ombudsperson was valuable.

In 2012, the staff member holding the ombudsperson position assumed the duties of deputy coordinator for Title IX and became responsible for overseeing university compliance with the investigation of student-on-student complaints of sexual harassment (including sexual assault). Thus, this office still serves students with complaints regarding university processes, procedures, and decisions but will no longer do so with a title of ombudsperson. Complaint logs are available for review. The standards of practice associated with the ombuds profession (e.g., that it is an independent, neutral, confidential, and informal resource and that the ombudsperson does not have duties associated with a formal grievance procedure) would make the combination of these two particular duties incompatible.
The assistant to the vice president for student affairs/deputy coordinator for Title IX will still offer students assistance with questions and concerns about policies, procedures, and decisions. It is expected that the opportunity for students to learn about dispute resolution skills and about relevant university policies and resource persons will not be lost with the discontinuance of the ombudsperson title. A process to document Title IX complaints resolved by this area was implemented in fall 2012.

Another student affairs area offering students assistance with complaints is the Office of Student Rights and Community Standards. Students may contact this office to report allegations of misconduct against another student. The office will investigate all complaints. This office also handles student grade appeals that have not been resolved at the department or college level.

Office of University Compliance

This office investigates student complaints of harassment, sexual harassment, and retaliation by faculty or staff and files annual summaries of its cases and their resolution.

Division of Academic Affairs

Since most student and parent complaints that rise to the university level are resolved by the associate provost and dean of University College, the Office of the Associate Provost maintains the student complaint logs for these situations. Any complaints submitted to the president or provost involving academic issues are sent to the associate provost. An initial analysis of the situation is completed. Issues related to faculty are generally sent to the respective dean’s office for follow-up. A representative from the dean’s office or the associate provost responds to the student with a resolution or provides additional information. Logs are maintained of student complaints resolved through the associate provost’s office.

An analysis of the types of complaints received indicates the most common student/parent issues are related to registration for online and on-campus classes, interactions with faculty, academic advising, student teaching, nursing program admission, and the Writing Proficiency Program and its effects upon graduation. In all cases when a complaint is reviewed and changes in policies or procedures are warranted, those changes have been made. Examples include the following:

- Student concerns over billing for taking an online class while registered for on-campus classes resulted in a major revision to all tuition policies. Now there is no additional charge for online classes as long as the student’s course load remains within 12–18 credit hours.
- As part of the university’s Roll Out the Red customer service initiative, Ball State created 10 faculty-student videos with discussion materials. These are available for deans and department chairs to use with faculty who might need assistance in this area. They are also used in new faculty orientation each year.
- Several changes have been made to the Writing Proficiency Program (WPP) during the past four or five years. In the previous process, students registered for a time to go to a testing site, where they were given a prompt to which they wrote. Now when students register for the WPP exam, they are given an essay to read and critique. When they arrive at the testing site, students are given
two prompts and select one to write an essay about the article. The program also provides additional classes for students who do not gain credit for the graduation requirement near the end of their last semester, giving them one last opportunity to complete the requirement without delaying their graduation.

- In response to complaints, the School of Nursing now designates five program admission slots for transfer students.
- Possible changes to academic advising have been the subject of several conversations, including the university’s administrative retreat and at least one task force focused on removing barriers to graduation. An initiative is under development to address issues raised in student complaints and other ideas to improve the information provided to students by academic advisors.
- Teachers College is increasing communication about student teaching placements in response to some student complaints about the process.

Year-end reports and files of the aggregated student complaints, responses, and resolutions as prepared and tracked by the associate provost for the past three years are available for review.

The University Grade Appeal Committee hears grade appeals referred to it by the Office of Student Rights and Community Standards. Records of grade appeals resolved through the formal grade appeal process are also kept in the Office of Student Rights and Community Standards.

**Transfer Policies**

Ball State’s policies and procedures governing undergraduate transfer credit are defined in the Undergraduate Catalog. Undergraduates with previous college experience follow the same application procedures as students with no post-secondary experience. Admission decisions are based upon applicants’ academic records at all educational institutions attended. A transfer student’s admissibility is based on these core policies:

- Transfer applicants must be in good academic standing and eligible to return immediately to the institution last attended.
- To be considered for admission, applicants must have cumulative grade point averages of at least 2.0 on a 4.0 scale for all transferable course work attempted.
- Remedial, vocational, and courses from institutions that are not regionally accredited (i.e., Middle States Association, North Central Association, New England Association, Northwest Association, Southern Association, Western Association) are not transferable. Although credit earned from unaccredited colleges and universities is not accepted as transfer credit, transcripts from all such institutions attended are still required.
- Students who apply for admission to Ball State while currently enrolled at other colleges and universities may be admitted on incomplete transcripts based on their current college or university cumulative grade point averages. Admission granted under such circumstances will be withdrawn if the cumulative grade point average falls below 2.0.
In terms of acceptance of transfer credit, all non-remedial, non-vocational course credits for which a student earns a 2.0 or better at colleges and universities accredited by regional accrediting agencies are accepted by Ball State. Only course credit transfers to Ball State; no grades transfer. All transfer admits must meet with a professional academic advisor before initial enrollment; official Ball State course equivalents will be established by the academic advisor in consultation with the appropriate academic department.

Along with the other state-affiliated colleges and universities in Indiana, Ball State collaborates with the Transfer Indiana Central Office (TICO) in maintaining the Indiana Core Transfer Library (CTL), an electronic resource that lists more than 80 common undergraduate courses and how they transfer among all participating institutions. This course-by-course equivalency library does not provide program-specific information but does provide prospective students with baseline course equivalencies by course and by institution.

**Verification of Student Identity**

To verify student identity, Ball State currently uses issued user names and passwords to access educational content (including assessments) through the Blackboard Learning Management System.

In fall 2012, Ball State implemented an online proctoring system for students in online courses using a software program called BVirtual. This software allows for heightened identity verification through randomly drawn, publically available questions that students must answer correctly before the assessment begins. A photo ID is also required to begin the assessment. During the assessment, BVirtual employs 365-degree cameras as well as keystroke analysis and desktop monitoring to detect cheating. Online students can also travel to Ball State’s Muncie, Indianapolis (downtown), or Fishers centers for a live-proctored assessment. The use of proctoring is at the discretion of the faculty member and is paid for by the university.

In addition to proctoring assessments, faculty members can employ SafeAssign, a plagiarism detection program.

**Title IV Program and Related Responsibilities**

**General Program Responsibilities**

Ball State complies with all Title IV program requirements. The State Board of Accounts conducts an annual review to monitor the ability of Ball State to adhere to Title IV program requirements. There have been no material findings reported for Title IV program administration for more than 10 years. The Department of Education has conducted no review. No limitation, suspension, or termination action has been initiated. Copies of the university’s last five audited financial reports are available on Ball State’s website.

**Financial Responsibility Requirements**

The State Board of Accounts conducts an annual review of Ball State’s financial statements. As indicated in the institution’s audited financial reports, no weaknesses/deficiencies have been identified in the internal control over financial reporting.
Student Loan Default Rates

Defaults on student loans are not good for students or taxpayers. At Ball State, responsible borrowing is stressed at high school recruitment visits and freshmen orientation and continues throughout a student’s academic career. Ball State uses an active confirmation process in student loan processing (versus passive confirmation). An active confirmation process requires that the student annually confirm the amount he or she wishes to borrow before a loan for that academic year is originated.

As shown in Table 6.1 below, Ball State’s official two-year cohort default rate in each of the past three years has been under 5 percent. (Note: The 2.2 percent for the fiscal year 2008 cohort was unusually low. The rate had been running at 3.0 or slightly above prior to that year.) Section 428G(a)(3) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 waives the multiple disbursement rule for colleges with a two-year cohort default rate that is less than 10 percent for three consecutive years. Section 438G(b)(1) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 waives the 30-day disbursement delay for first-time, first-year undergraduate borrowers for colleges with a two-year cohort default rate less than 10 percent for three consecutive years.

Ball State uses both of these options. No other sanctions occur based upon the two-year cohort default rate until the rate exceeds 25 percent for three consecutive years or 40 percent in any one year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Borrowers in Default</th>
<th>Number in Cohort</th>
<th>Ball State Percentage*</th>
<th>National Average**</th>
<th>Public Four-Year Schools**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>3,921</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>3,602</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>5,040</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Scholarships and Financial Aid, Ball State Cohort Default Rate—Two-Year, 2012
**Scholarships and Financial Aid, National Default Rate Briefings, September 28, 2012, Page 5
Note: Documentation is available.

Congress made changes in the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 (PL 110-315, August 14, 2008). Section 436(e) expands the two-year default rate window to three years. The reporting of the new cohort default rate began in fiscal year 2012 (i.e., for borrowers entering repayment in fiscal year 2009) but will only be used for sanctions after three consecutive years of new cohort default rate data are available, meaning that there will be no sanctions until fiscal year 2011’s cohort default rate data are available. Cohort default rate data are typically made available on September 15, so the new definitions will not be effective for sanctions until the start of fiscal year 2014.

To compensate somewhat for the effect of the change in definition of the cohort default rate, section 436(a) of the law replaces the 25 percent threshold in effect for fiscal year 1994 through fiscal year 2011 with a 30 percent threshold for fiscal year 2012 onward. In addition, section 427 of the law indicates that starting October 1, 2011 (fiscal year 2012), waivers for the multiple disbursement rule and 30-day delay have the threshold increased from 10 percent to 15 percent. The move to a three-year calculation increases the default rate for Ball State
students; however, the rate is still under any threshold that would result in a significant sanction (see Table 6.2 below).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Borrowers in Default</th>
<th>Number in Cohort</th>
<th>Ball State Percentage*</th>
<th>National Average**</th>
<th>Public Four-Year Schools***</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>3,597</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Scholarships and Financial Aid, Ball State Cohort Default Rate—Three-Year, 2012
**Scholarships and Financial Aid, National Default Rate Briefings, September 28, 2012, Page 7
Documentation is available.

**Campus Crime Information, Athletic Participation and Financial Aid, and Related Disclosures**

The Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 (HEOA) requires that postsecondary institutions participating in Title IV federal student aid programs make certain disclosures available to students (Student Consumer Information). To comply with the requirements, Ball State created a centralized Student Consumer Information website. Prior to October 1 each year, students are sent a notification outlining the types of information disclosed with direct links to the website. For additional information, including requesting a paper copy of any materials, students are told to contact the appropriate office(s) as listed.

Ball State publishes crime statistics annually on its website in compliance with the Higher Education Act of 1965 as amended by the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008, which requires all postsecondary institutions participating in federal student aid programs to disclose campus security policies and certain crime statistics. In addition, crime statistics are sent monthly to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). The annual report provides statistics for the past three years in the following categories: crimes committed on campus, in or around noncampus buildings, and on public property. Recent crime and fire statistics reports are available on the university website.

Ball State makes athletic participation data available to the public through the Equity in Athletics Data Analysis Cutting Tool, linked through the university’s Student Consumer Information website. This tool was designed to provide rapid customized reports for public inquiries relating to equity in athletics data. The data are drawn from the OPE Equity in Athletics Disclosure Website database. This database consists of athletics data submitted annually as required by the Equity in Athletics Disclosure Act (EADA) via a web-based data collection by all coeducational postsecondary institutions that receive Title IV funding (i.e., those that participate in federal student aid programs) and that have an intercollegiate athletics program.

**Student Right to Know**

The Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 (HEOA) requires that postsecondary institutions participating in Title IV federal student aid programs make certain disclosures available to students (Student Consumer Information). To comply with the requirements, Ball State created a centralized Student Consumer Information website. Prior to October 1 each year, students are sent a notification outlining the types of information disclosed with direct links to the website. For
additional information, including requesting a paper copy of any materials, students are told to contact the appropriate office(s) as listed.

In addition to the overall Student Consumer Information website, specific items mentioned in the general requirements for this component are provided in the following areas of the Ball State website:

- Graduation/Completion Rates
- Withdrawal Policy
- Cost of Attendance
- Refund and Return of Title IV Aid
- Academic Programs
- Faculty profiled in department sites and searchable directory
- Accreditation (last page of document)
- Disabled Student Facilities and Services
- Study Abroad

**Satisfactory Academic Progress and Attendance Policies**

Ball State’s policies on satisfactory academic progress and university attendance for financial aid eligibility are available on the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid website.

**Contractual Relationships**

No such contractual relationships exist for Ball State.

**Consortial Relationships**

No such consortial relationships exist for Ball State.

**Required Information for Students and the Public**

Ball State publishes fair, accurate, and complete information on required disclosure information including, but not limited to, the following topics, all of which can be found on the university’s website:

- Calendar
- Grading
- Admissions
- Academic Program Requirements
• Tuition and Fees
• Refund Policies

Graduate and undergraduate course catalogs and the university’s Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities (Ball State’s student handbook) are available in the accreditation online resource room and the Ball State website.

Advertising and Recruitment Materials and Other Public Information

Accreditation Information

Ball State’s advertisements and recruiting materials provide clear, accurate, timely, and appropriately detailed information to current and prospective students about the institution’s accreditation status with the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). These materials are produced on an annual basis and available to the general public including, but not limited to, prospective students, current students, faculty, staff, and community members.

• Admissions Viewbook: “Ball State is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. Individual programs are accredited by regional and national organizations.”

• University Catalog: “Ball State University is accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.”

• Facts Brochure: “Ball State is classified as a research university, high research activity by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.”

The university displays the Higher Learning Commission’s mark of affiliation prominently on its Institutional Accreditation website, and it is linked to HLC’s Statement of Affiliation Status for the university. The website of the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs also includes information about Ball State’s accreditation status with the HLC and displays its mark of affiliation.

Program accreditations by other agencies are listed in the Undergraduate Catalog, which is available to the public on the university’s website.

Academic Information

Ball State conveniently provides clear, timely, and accurate information to current and prospective students about its academic programs, policies, and procedures on the Academic Advising website. Additional information pertinent to career planning and placement can be found on the Career Center website. Licensure information is typically provided on the websites of individual programs, such as teacher education, nursing, and social work.

Review of Student Outcome Data

Ball State collects information about student outcomes and uses it to inform institutional planning, program review, and academic assessments. These ongoing efforts are discussed
fully under Criterion Four of the university’s accreditation self-study report for the Higher Learning Commission.

Standing with State with Other Accrediting Agencies

Ball State’s accredited programs have not been under sanction or show cause orders nor received adverse actions from any federally recognized specialized or institutional accreditor or state entity. The university’s online presence in other states is being directed by Indiana’s developing consortial arrangements with other states. Currently, the university has contacted states where online students have enrolled or attempted to enroll to ensure we are in full compliance with respective state rules and regulations. In at least once case, Ball State has determined that it cannot enroll Minnesota residents in online programs because of that state’s high approval fees.

Ball State offers online courses to students in 46 states and six foreign countries. The largest population of online students resides in Indiana, with a regional presence in Ohio, Kentucky, Illinois, and Michigan. Based on the current interpretation, Ball State does not have a “physical presence” in any state other than Indiana. The university has investigated requirements for state authorization and, following the advice of the American Council on Education and the Indiana Commission for Higher Education, plans to participate in the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA).

Public Notification of Opportunity to Comment

Ball State has used a multifaceted approach to inform its constituencies about the solicitation of third-party comment on its institutional self-study report. Notice of the third-party comment procedure was distributed to the public on campus and in the local community through a variety of print and electronic methods, including e-mails, posters, campus dining table tents, news releases, and media advertisements. The first opportunity to review and comment on the draft self-study report was provided in November 2012. The public was also invited to review and comment on the revised draft before the end of the academic year in April 2013.

For both public review periods, the draft self-study report was posted on the university’s accreditation website, which could be accessed by typing bsu.edu/accreditation. Comment forms and a survey were also provided online. Three open forums were conducted on and off campus in November 2012 to present the draft report, solicit comments and feedback, and answer questions. The cochairs of the university’s Accreditation Steering Committee also met with all university employees—including faculty, professional, staff, and service personnel—unit by unit to inform them of the accreditation process and to encourage participation.