

Federal Compliance Program

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.

I. Credits, Program Length, and Tuition

a. Credits and Program Length

Ball State University operates on a traditional semester system and offers academic credit in terms of semester credit hour. 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 has 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 will be introduced into the governance system 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 the Graduate Catalog.

b. Tuition

Ball State University's tuition and mandatory fees are set by the Board of Trustees. On June 16, 2011, the board approved the university'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.

Overviews of the presentation on the tuition restructuring plan given to the public and the Board of Trustees are available for review.

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.

II. Student Complaints

Historically, Ball State University 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.

a. Division of Student Affairs

For almost 20 years, Ball State University’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, the office will still serve students with complaints regarding university processes, procedures, and decisions but will no longer do so with a title of ombudsperson. 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 will be in effect 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 is also a first point of contact for students wishing to complain about a grade and explore the possibility of grade appeal.

b. Office of University Compliance

This office investigates student complaints of harassment, sexual harassment, and retaliation and files an annual report of its cases and their resolution.

c. Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Logs are maintained of student complaints resolved in this office. 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 this office.

Year-end reports and files of the aggregated student complaints, response, and resolution as prepared and tracked by the areas above for the past three years are available for review.

III. Transfer Policies

Ball State University'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, 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.

IV. Verification of Student Identity

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

Beginning in fall 2012, Ball State will implement 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.

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

V. Title IV Program and Related Responsibilities

a. General Program Responsibilities

Ball State University 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 last five State Board of Accounts reports are available on Ball State's website.

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Prepared for the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

b. Financial Responsibility Requirements

The State Board of Accounts conducts an annual review of Ball State University's financial statements. No weaknesses/deficiencies have been identified in the internal control over financial reporting. Copies of the last five State Board of Accounts reports and the associated annual financial reports are available on Ball State's website.

c. Student Loan Default Rates

Defaults on student loans are not good for students or taxpayers. At Ball State University, 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.

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.

Two-Year Cohort Default Rate					
Year	Borrowers in Default	Number in Cohort	Ball State Percentage*	National Average**	Public Four-Year Schools**
2010	196	3,921	4.9%	9.1%	6.0%
2009	125	3,602	3.4%	8.8%	5.2%
2008	112	5,040	2.2%	7.0%	4.4%

*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 will begin 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.

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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 will 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.

Three-Year Cohort Default Rate					
Year	Borrowers in Default	Number in Cohort	Ball State Percentage*	National Average**	Public Four-Year Schools**
2009	196	3,597	5.4%	13.4%	7.9%

*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.

d. 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 University 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 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. Statistics are published annually on Ball State's website. 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 non-campus buildings, and on public property. Copies of 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. 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 co-educational postsecondary institutions that receive Title IV funding (i.e., those that participate in federal student aid programs) and that have an intercollegiate athletics program. The link to the tool is available on the Ball State Student Consumer Information website.

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e. 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 University 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
- Accreditation
- Disabled Student Facilities and Services
- Study Abroad

f. Satisfactory Academic Progress and Attendance Policies

Ball State University's Satisfactory Academic Policy is available online.

g. Contractual Relationships

No such contractual relationships exist for Ball State University.

h. Consortial Relationships

No such consortial relationships exist for Ball State University.

VI. Institutional Disclosures and Advertising and Recruitment Materials

Ball State University produces multiple documents that refer to the university's accreditation status: Admissions Viewbook, University Catalog, Facts Brochure, and Guidance Counselor Information Sheet. All of the documents 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. The Admissions Viewbook and Guidance Counselor Information Sheet are only available in print.

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These materials contain the following text about the university's accreditation status:

- **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 ranked 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. Individual programs are accredited by various regional and national organizations."
- **Guidance Counselor Information Sheet:** "Ball State is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools and is classified as a research university/high research activity by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching."

Other areas of the Ball State website also provide information about accreditation status:

- 2004 Accreditation
- Institutional Accreditation
- Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

The university does not currently use the Higher Learning Commission's web address or mark of affiliation in its advertising and recruitment materials. However, the commission's mark of affiliation is displayed prominently on Ball State's Institutional Accreditation website, and it is linked to the commission's Statement of Affiliation Status for the university.

VII. Relationship with Other Accrediting Agencies and with State Regulatory Bodies

Information about Ball State University's relationship with other accrediting agencies is available for review in the *Directory of Accrediting Agencies HLC 4.5 7 25 12 Version*.

To review a timeline of academic reviews, see the *Cycle of Academic Unit Reviews 2004–2015*.

Accreditation policies at Ball State are also discussed in the university's Self-Study Report: Criterion Four narrative.

VIII. Public Notification of Comprehensive Evaluation Visit and Third Party Comment

Ball State University 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 through a variety of print and electronic methods, including e-mails, posters, campus dining table tents, news releases, and advertisements in campus and community media.