

BOARD OF REGENTS BRIEFING PAPER

1. AGENDA ITEM TITLE: Handbook and NSHE Procedures and Guidelines Revision: Excess Credit Fee

MEETING DATE: March 1-2, 2018

2. BACKGROUND & POLICY CONTEXT OF ISSUE:

Pursuant to Board policy, a 50 percent Excess Credit Fee on the per-credit registration fee is charged to a student who has accrued attempted credits equal to 150 percent of the credits required for the student's program of study (*Title 4, Chapter 17, Section 4*). Following the approval of this policy in 2012, the Chancellor's Office set forth procedures to guide the administration of the excess credit fee by the institutions.

Within the past year, the NSHE Internal Audit Department conducted audits of the administration/imposition of the excess credit fee at multiple institutions and presented the audit reports to the Board of Regents' Audit and Compliance Committee. Under the audit reports for UNLV and UNR that were presented to and approved by the Audit and Compliance Committee in November, the NSHE Internal Audit Department included the following recommendations for revisions to the *Handbook* and the *NSHE Procedures and Guidelines Manual* to clarify the administrative procedures governing the excess credit fee:

- Require that the administrative review be performed before students file an appeal to help ensure the excess credit fee is correctly applied to student accounts; and
- Make the lists of credits subject to exclusion through the administrative review/appeal process, including audit and non-transferrable course credits, consistent in the *Handbook* and the *NSHE Procedures and Guidelines Manual*.

The System Office prepared these revisions to the *Handbook* and the *NSHE Procedures and Guidelines Manual*, including related technical revisions, and recommends approval to facilitate the consistent administration/imposition of the excess credit fee by all institutions.

3. SPECIFIC ACTIONS BEING RECOMMENDED OR REQUESTED:

Amend *Title 4, Chapter 17, Section 4* of the *Handbook* to provide one complete list of the credits that must be excluded from the excess credit fee calculation, including audit and non-transferrable credits, and clarify the requirement for institutions to establish an appeal process. Amend Chapter 7, Section 2 of the *NSHE Procedures and Guidelines Manual* to clarify that institutions must conduct an initial administrative review to determine if any credits should be excluded pursuant to the list under *Title 4, Chapter 17, Section 4*. Additional technical revisions are included. (See the attached policy proposals.)

4. IMPETUS (WHY NOW?):

These revisions are recommended by the NSHE Internal Audit Department pursuant to the Internal Audit Reports on the UNLV and UNR Excess Credit Fee for January 1, 2016 through December 31, 2016.

5. CHECK THE NSHE STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL THAT IS SUPPORTED BY THIS REQUEST:

- Access (Increase participation in post-secondary education)
- Success (Increase student success)
- Close the Achievement Gap (Close the achievement gap among underserved student populations)
- Workforce (Collaboratively address the challenges of the workforce and industry education needs of Nevada)
- Research (Co-develop solutions to the critical issues facing 21st century Nevada and raise the overall research profile)
- Not Applicable to NSHE Strategic Plan Goals

INDICATE HOW THE PROPOSAL SUPPORTS THE SPECIFIC STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL

The Board established the Excess Credit Fee in 2012, based on the recommendation of the NSHE Access and Affordability Committee as tool to encourage students to complete their degree in a timely manner. This policy revision is important for the efficient administration of this fee for both the students and the institutions.

6. BULLET POINTS TO SUPPORT REQUEST/RECOMMENDATION:

- The revisions recommended pursuant to the audits will provide clarity in the administration of the excess credit fee for the institutions and the students.

7. POTENTIAL ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE REQUEST/RECOMMENDATION:

None have been presented.

8. ALTERNATIVE(S) TO WHAT IS BEING REQUESTED/RECOMMENDED:

None have been presented.

9. RECOMMENDATION FROM THE CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE:

The Chancellor's Office recommends passage of this policy revision for the reasons set forth above.

10. COMPLIANCE WITH BOARD POLICY:

- Consistent With Current Board Policy: Title #_____ Chapter #_____ Section #_____
- X Amends Current Board Policy: Title 4, Chapter 17, Section 4
- X Amends Current Procedures & Guidelines Manual: Chapter 7, Section 2
- Other:_____
- Fiscal Impact: Yes_____ No__X__
Explain:_____

POLICY PROPOSAL
TITLE 4, CHAPTER 17, SECTION 4
Excess Credit Fee

Additions appear in *boldface italics*; deletions are [~~stricken~~ and bracketed]

Section 4. Excess Credit Fee

1. A 50 percent Excess Credit Fee on the per-credit registration fee shall be charged to a *degree-seeking undergraduate* student (*resident and non-resident*) who has accrued attempted credits equal to 150 percent of the credits required for the student's program of study. The Excess Credit Fee shall be imposed on registration fees charged [~~in the current semester and~~] in subsequent semesters, including summer terms, where a student's cumulative credit hour total exceeds 150 percent of the credits required for the student's program of study.
2. Except as otherwise provided in this subsection, credits from previously earned degrees or certificates shall be excluded from the 150 percent credit calculation. For a student seeking: [~~a bachelor's degree who has previously earned a certificate or associate's degree, attempted credits from those previously earned awards will be included in the Excess Credit Fee threshold calculation.~~]
 - a. A first bachelor's degree who has previously earned a certificate or associate's degree, attempted credits from those previously earned awards will be included in the Excess Credit Fee threshold calculation.*
 - b. A bachelor's degree who has previously earned a bachelor's degree or a higher award, attempted credits from those previously earned awards will not be included in the Excess Credit Fee threshold calculation.*
 - c. An associate's degree who has previously earned an associate's degree, or a higher award, attempted credits from those previously earned awards will not be included in the Excess Credit Fee threshold calculation.*
 - d. A certificate of at least 30 hours who has previously earned a certificate of at least 30 hours or a higher award, attempted credits from those previously earned awards will not be included in the Excess Credit Fee threshold calculation.*
 - e. A certificate of less than 30 credit hours who has previously earned a certificate of less than 30 hours or a higher award, attempted credits from those previously earned awards will not be included in the Excess Credit Fee threshold calculation.*
3. Institutions shall [~~establish an appeals process and may~~] exclude from the 150 percent calculation the following:
 - a. Credits earned [~~through examinations for determining credit~~] for prior learning as authorized in Title 4, Chapter 14;
 - b. Credits attempted while enrolled as a high school student if those credits do not meet the degree requirements for the student's program of study;

- c. Credits attempted at an institution outside NSHE if those credits do not meet the degree requirements for the student's program of study;
 - d. Credits attempted for remedial courses; ~~and~~
 - e. ~~[Other credits determined by the institution as inappropriate for the 150 percent credit calculation.] Credits from previously earned degrees or certificates, as provided in subsection 2 of this section;~~
 - f. *Credits not accepted for transfer at the receiving institution;*
 - g. *Credits associated with courses taken for audit or for which an audit grade is received;*
 - h. *Credits associated with community service and non-credit bearing continuing education courses; and*
 - i. *Credits for post-baccalaureate and post-masters certification courses.*
4. *Institutions shall establish a process through which a student subject to the Excess Credit Fee may file an appeal requesting a review of the credits included in the 150 percent credit calculation. Through the appeals process, the institution may exclude other credits determined by the institution as inappropriate for the 150 percent credit calculation, in addition to the credits that must be excluded pursuant to subsections 2 and 3 of this section.*

~~[Community service and non-credit bearing continuing education courses are not subject to the provisions of this section. Credits for post-baccalaureate and post-masters certification courses are also not subject to the provisions of this section.]~~

- 5. The revenue generated from the Excess Credit Fee shall supplement student advising and counseling services, including salary and wages, operating, and equipment expenses.
- 6. Institutions shall publicize the Excess Credit Fee policy set forth in this section in such a manner to ensure that students have adequate notification of the fee. Institutions shall establish a procedure for notifying students who are approaching the 150 percent credit threshold.

NSHE Procedures and Guidelines Manual
CHAPTER 7, SECTION 2
Excess Credit Fee

Additions appear in ***boldface italics***; deletions are [~~stricken~~ and bracketed]

Section 2. Excess Credit Fee Procedures

1. As required by Board policy (Title 4, Chapter 17, ***Section 4***), a 50 percent Excess Credit Fee on the per-credit registration fee shall be charged to a student who has accrued attempted credits equal to 150 percent of the credits required for the student's program of study. The Excess Credit Fee shall be imposed on the per-credit registration fee charged:

- a. To degree-seeking undergraduate resident and non-resident students; and
- b. At the beginning of any semester that follows an institution's determination that the Excess Credit Fee applies to a student. For example, a student whose program of study requires 120 credits (a standard bachelor's degree) who has accumulated 175 attempted credits prior to the Fall semester and then enrolls in six credits in the Fall semester will reach the 180 credit threshold in the Fall semester. The Excess Credit Fee must be imposed on the student starting in the following Spring semester or in any subsequent semesters.

[~~2. For a student seeking:~~

- a. ~~A first bachelor's degree who has previously earned a certificate or associate's degree, attempted credits from those previously earned awards will be included in the Excess Credit Fee threshold calculation.~~
- b. ~~A bachelor's degree who has previously earned a bachelor's degree or a higher award, attempted credits from those previously earned awards will not be included in the Excess Credit Fee threshold calculation.~~
- c. ~~An associate's degree who has previously earned an associate's degree, or a higher award, attempted credits from those previously earned awards will not be included in the Excess Credit Fee threshold calculation.~~
- d. ~~A certificate of at least 30 hours who has previously earned a certificate of at least 30 hours or a higher award, attempted credits from those previously earned awards will not be included in the Excess Credit Fee threshold calculation.~~
- e. ~~A certificate of less than 30 credit hours who has previously earned a certificate of less than 30 hours or a higher award, attempted credits from those previously earned awards will not be included in the Excess Credit Fee threshold calculation.]~~

2. ***Administrative Review Before Charging the Excess Credit Fee:*** *Before charging a student the Excess Credit Fee, the institution shall conduct an administrative review of the student's accrued credits and exclude credits from the 150 percent calculation as required by Title 4,*

Chapter 17, Section 4 and this section. The institution may designate staff or establish reports or both to conduct the administrative review.

Any credits excluded in the administrative review shall be excluded for all future terms unless the student changes his or her program of study or is no longer in good academic standing. In these circumstances, the institution may reevaluate the calculation and any excluded credits through an administrative review. If upon reevaluation the student exceeds the 150 percent credit threshold, the institution shall impose the Excess Credit Fee.

3. The Excess Credit Fee calculation is based on the number of credits required for a student's program of study. **The following procedures shall be used for the calculation, if applicable:**
 - a. **Program of Study Exceeds Standard Number of Credits** – If the student's program of study exceeds the standard number of credits for the type of degree or certificate awarded, the calculation must be based on the actual number of credits required for that program of study. For example, if a student is pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Nursing that requires 124 credits, the student is not subject to the Excess Credit Fee until the student has accumulated 186 (150 percent of 124) or more attempted credits.
 - b. **Multiple Programs of Study** – **If a student declared more than one program of study (e.g. double major), the calculation for the Excess Credit Fee must be based on the total unduplicated number of credits required for the programs of study.**
4. When attempted credits are reported or transferred after the beginning of the semester, these additional credits will not be considered in determining whether a student meets the Excess Credit Fee threshold until the following semester.
5. If a student is approved for a waiver of the Excess Credit Fee upon appeal pursuant to Subsection 8, the institution must issue a refund of any excess credit fee amounts already paid for the term approved for a waiver.
6. The procedures established by the institutions for notifying students who are approaching the 150 percent credit threshold shall also include procedures for notifying students who shall be charged the Excess Credit Fee prior to the start of each semester for which the Excess Credit Fee will be charged.
7. As required by Board policy, institutions shall publicize the Excess Credit Fee policy and must include the following statement in appropriate institutional materials, including course catalogs and websites:

An Excess Credit Fee shall be charged to a student who has attempted credits equal to 150 percent of the credits required for the student's program of study. The amount of this additional fee is equal to 50 percent of the per credit registration fee. Attempted credits include all graded courses on a student's transcript, including but not limited to the grades of F and W (withdrawal) and repeated courses. The fee will be charged, for example, after 90 credits have been attempted towards a 60-credit associate's degree or 180 credits towards a 120-credit bachelor's degree. Exceptions may apply on a case-by-case basis. The fee will be charged in all terms after passing the threshold number of credits until a degree is awarded to the student. Appeal procedures and other exceptions to this fee are outlined in the catalog.

8. As required by Board policy, institutions shall establish an appeals process. Any student subject to the Excess Credit Fee may file an appeal. Within this process, institutions shall utilize the following and may issue a waiver from the Excess Credit Fee:

~~a. **Administrative Review**—If a student files an appeal, the institution shall conduct an administrative review of the calculation used for imposing the Excess Credit Fee on the student, including the number of credits required for the student’s program(s) of study and the credits accumulated by the student and included within the calculation. [This review must be conducted prior to sending any student’s appeal to a committee created pursuant to this Subsection.~~

~~Institutions may also elect to conduct an administrative review of the calculation prior to imposing the Excess Credit Fee to confirm the number of credits required for a student’s program(s) of study or to exclude the credits listed below.~~

~~The institution may designate staff or establish reports or both to conduct the administrative review. Institutions may establish reports that exclude the credits listed below for the purpose of the Excess Credit Fee calculation.]~~

~~The following credits are subject to exclusion through the administrative review:~~

- ~~i.—Credits earned [through examinations for determining credit] for prior learning as authorized in Title 4, Chapter 14;~~
- ~~ii.—Credits attempted while enrolled as a high school student if those credits do not meet the degree requirements for the student’s program of study;~~
- ~~iii.—Credits attempted at an institution outside NSHE if those credits do not meet the degree requirements for the student’s program of study;~~
- ~~iv.—Credits attempted for remedial courses;~~
- ~~v.—Credits attempted for community service courses; and~~
- ~~vi. Credits from previously earned degrees or certificates, as provided in Subsection 2 of this Section.]~~

~~[b]a. **[Subsequent] Committee Review** – [After an administrative review initiated by a student’s appeal, if a student still exceeds the 150 percent threshold, the] *If a student files an appeal, the* institution shall utilize a committee to review the *credits included in the 150 percent credit calculation* [student’s attempted credits] and determine any credits that may be excluded from the 150 percent credit calculation, *pursuant to Board policy and this section.*~~

~~[c. **Multiple Programs of Study**—If a student declared more than one program of study (e.g. double major), the calculation for the Excess Credit Fee must be based on the total unduplicated number of credits required for the programs of study.]~~

~~[d]b. **Academic Standing** – Academic standing/progress, including GPA, may be a criterion considered in approving a waiver from the Excess Credit Fee.~~

~~[e]c. **Credits Excluded by Appeal** – Any credits excluded in the [administrative review or by a subsequent] committee review shall be excluded for all future terms unless the student changes his or her program of study, does not follow the academic plan reviewed as part of the student’s appeal, or is no longer in good academic standing. In these circumstances, the institution may reevaluate the calculation and any~~

excluded credits. If upon reevaluation the student exceeds the 150 percent credit threshold, the institution shall impose the Excess Credit Fee, and the student may submit a new appeal.

[f]d. Form for Appeal – Institutions shall utilize the common form developed by the Chancellor’s Office for students to initiate the appeals process. That form shall include an academic plan.